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## NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

### SPECIAL NUMBER—I.

#### The Week's Programme.

- Monday.**—Guilds' Union Meetings.  
7.30 Young People's Rally.
- Tuesday.**—12.30, Pensions Fund Meeting.  
3.45, Social Service Union.  
4.0, President's Reception.  
4.30, Business Meeting, I.  
7.30, Religious Service. Sermon by the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed.
- Wednesday.**—9.30, Communion Service  
10.30, President's Address.  
11.30, Conference ("The Problem of Evil"). Professor Henry Jones (Glasgow).  
2.30, Business Meeting, II.  
7.30, Conversazione.
- Thursday.**—9.30, Religious Service.  
Sermon by the Rev. Dr. S. A. Eliot (President, A.U.A).  
11.0, Conference ("The Wider Meaning of Modernism"). The Revs. J. M. Lloyd Thomas and J. W. Austin.  
2.30, Conference ("Reform of the Poor Law"). Mrs. Bosanquet and the Rev. Percy Dearmer.  
7.30, Public Meeting.
- Friday.**—9.30, Service of Consecration.  
10.15, Conference ("Our Congregations"). The Revs. F. K. Freeston and J. Harwood.  
12.30, Address on "The Ministry as a Vocation," by the Rev. Dr. J. Edwin Odgers.

## THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

### TENTH TRIENNIAL MEETING AT BOLTON.

OUR record of the Conference meetings at Bolton must be completed next week. Writing in the midst of a crowded week, we can only briefly note here that the meetings have been eminently successful, both in the point of numbers and in the sustained interest of the proceedings. Nothing could exceed the heartiness of the welcome given by friends in Bolton to the Conference, nor the admirable completeness of the hospitable arrangements made for the comfort and convenience of the guests.

The pleasant prelude to the Conference's programme, the Guilds' Union meeting and the gathering of Young People on the Monday evening, was again a great success. There at once the presence of Dr. ELIOT, President of the American Unitarian Association, struck a most welcome note, repeated again and again during the week. The sermon which he preached in the Town Hall on Thursday morning on "A Practical Idealism" is included in our present issue. The Conference Sermon by the Rev. PHILIP WICKSTEED on "The Everlasting Gospel," preached at the service on Tuesday evening, we must publish next week. The Town Hall was filled with a congregation which must have been well over a thousand, and the uplift of the hymns was glorious. We do not often have so happy an occasion of mingling in a great outpouring of praise and aspiration. The lesson consisted of the profoundly spiritual passages of DEUTERONOMY xxx., JEREMIAH xxxi., and GALATIANS v. The one jar in the service, we ought perhaps to confess, was to us after the singing of EMERSON'S hymn, with its concluding lines:—

"One accent of the Holy Ghost

The heedless world has never lost," when we were all eager for the sermon, and there came instead a long break for the collection. Would it not be better for the service to take a collection as the people come in, and have done with it, or else to leave the money alone? Many, we are told, found the sermon difficult to follow; but do not let them on that account fail to read it next week, and take to heart its great appeal.

The business meeting, it will be seen,

was well completed within the time allotted in two sessions, and something was accomplished which should bear good fruit in the greater efficiency of our church life. The Report must speak for itself, both as to the resolutions passed, and as to one less desirable incident.

Wednesday was a full day, opening with the communion service in Bank-street Chapel, conducted by the Revs. J. COLLINS ODGERS and H. J. ROSSINGTON. Next came the President's address, printed here in full, and after that Professor HENRY JONES'S address on "The Problem of Evil," given in his most delightful and quickening manner. Our readers know already how inspiring a teacher he is, how he holds his audience and persuades and convinces with humour and searching argument and direct appeal to experience. He and they on Wednesday gave little heed of time, the subject was too engrossing, and there could be no discussion. We do not yet know how much of the address it will be possible to reproduce next week, but the living touch can only remain with those who had the privilege of being present. Dr. CARPENTER was in the chair, and Mr. BOYCE GIBSON and Dr. MELLONE moved and seconded the vote of thanks to Professor JONES, which was carried with great warmth of feeling.

The Town Hall had to be given up in the afternoon to preparations for the conversazione in the evening, and thus the second session of the business meeting came to be held in the Mawdsley-street Congregational Church, near by, most kindly lent by the minister and officers of the church for the occasion. It proved a most convenient meeting-place, and the thanks of the Conference were cordially expressed. The conversazione was an extremely pleasant social occasion. A band played in the large hall and in the Council Chamber the Bank-street Chapel choir rendered a programme of vocal music. They were happy who could be there and enjoy the meeting with many friends.

The Thursday papers on "Reform of the Poor Law," and the Friday papers on "Our Congregations: Their Worship; and Their Membership and Internal Organisation," are printed this week. The rest we shall hope to furnish, including a full report of the evening meeting, in a second special number next week.



## THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE. BUSINESS MEETING.

THE business meeting occupied two sessions, the first being held on Tuesday afternoon in the Town Hall, after the President's reception.

THE PRESIDENT, the Rev. JOSEPH WOOD, took the chair, and welcomed the ministers and delegates, and other members of the churches, to the tenth triennial meeting of the Conference. Looking back, he noted that of the thirteen of their friends who called together the first Conference, eleven had passed away. It was matter of rejoicing that their work and influence remained. He recalled the names of Beard, Armstrong, Crosskey, Rawson, and other leaders, of whom they thought with infinite thankfulness to God for all that they did for the cause to which they all were so strongly attached. If all the hopes they entertained when they started the Conference had not been realised, some things had come to something like fulfilment. He remembered, at the second meeting in Birmingham in 1885, Dr. Crosskey uttered the almost prophetic word, "I regard the formation of this National Conference as constituting an epoch in the history of our Free Churches." Dr. Crosskey could not foresee possible developments, but the Conference amid considerable difficulties had done some considerable things for the churches. On two occasions it had raised large funds, the Sustentation and the Pensions Funds, and had given birth to Advisory Committees, the Guilds' Union, and the Social Service Union, and through its influence local associations had become more representative of the churches. At its various gatherings deeper aspirations and religious sympathies had been called into fuller play, and the gatherings have done much to bind the members of the churches together as one body animated by one spirit.

To that tenth session they had not invited foreign delegates, partly because the International Congress now did that work; and on that occasion they had only one guest—not a foreigner, but a guest of their own blood, and their own faith, honoured on both sides of the water both for the distinguished name he bore and the immense services he had rendered to the cause of liberal religion. They who went to America to the International at Boston remembered the great kindness, the gracious and thoughtful arrangements made by Dr. Eliot and his friends for their reception and comfort. It was a great pleasure to welcome the President of the American Unitarian Association to their Conference. No man in America had done more for their churches than he. During his Presidency of some years he had doubled its income and more than doubled its usefulness over that vast area. Dr. Eliot had been largely instrumental in bringing the churches of America into that kind of vital union they were themselves seeking. The President concluded by moving a resolution of hearty welcome to the President of the American Unitarian Association, thanking him for his visit, and assuring him of warm personal regard, and through him sending cordial greetings to the churches in America, united to them

by kindred memories and common purposes.

MR. JOHN HARRISON, president of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, seconded the resolution, and spoke warmly of the pleasure and stimulus of Dr. Eliot's presence in their midst.

DR. ELIOT, responding to the resolution, was received with very hearty and prolonged applause. He said:—

MR. PRESIDENT,—I make grateful and heartfelt acknowledgment of the courtesy of the Conference, and deeply appreciate the honour done me in the resolution you have just adopted. Of course, I recognise that your welcome is accorded not to the individual, but rather to the fellowship that he represents, to your fellow-workers far across the sea, who are bound with you in the control of the law of liberty. It is a great privilege, Sir, which you permit me to enjoy here, and I rejoice in every sign of the deep desire for unity and efficiency which more and more animates the free churches of our order. A common religious purpose and hope is the surest of bonds. I yield to no one in my adherence to our traditional principle of self-reliant independency, but I delight in every indication that the providence of God is now leading our churches into a new era wherein the guiding principle is fellowship. I believe that we shall do well to strengthen all the ties which bind us together, to consolidate our activities, to unify our methods, that without sacrifice of essential independency we may work more and more together for the coming of the Kingdom of God. We do not propose to dwell ever in tents, or exist as outcast atoms rejected by the law of gravitation. Religious liberty is not a competition in which the prize is taken by the individual that can exhibit the greatest singularity. We are not, because we are free, obliged to exaggerate our dissents, or to strain the bonds of brotherhood to the utmost. Fellowship is just as essential an element in our success as freedom. This Conference is not merely an ecclesiastical convenience or a desirable expediency. It is a living entity, the vital utterance of a purpose and hope. It is the outward sign of the inherent unity of the Liberal Church; it reveals the working of the spirit of brotherhood, it encompasses us with the warmth of citizenship, and presents the opportunity for the exercise of a diversity of gifts towards the attainment of a common purpose. Our churches were founded on the faith that each individual will be at his best when he is free to build his own life, to shape his own career, to pursue his own ambition. Now we are beginning to add to that splendid dynamic the equally precious principle of brotherhood. We discover that in service is the only perfect freedom. We discern that the highest law is liberty, and that the highest liberty is law. We hold the vital unity of the spirit, not a barren uniformity of thought and custom. We are agreed that in freedom there must be differentiation, but in all the calmer moods, which we know to be our wiser moods, it is transparently clear that we are trying to say the same things, to follow the same ideals. We are trying to sing the same music, but we have not all the skill to hit or keep the

key. The remedy is that we must practise more together. Gradually we are building the ideals of freedom, unity, and brotherhood into the vital religious life of Great Britain and of America, but still we must be vigilant to defend these ideals against the outward assaults of sacerdotal and dogmatic assertion and from the inward perils of anarchy on the one hand and reaction on the other. When every man among us, beyond his home affections, beyond his everyday concerns, feels the illimitable attraction of those great ideals, then will the church to which those individuals belong begin to have a great and progressive and beneficent life. Its influence will penetrate into everything that is done or capable of being done. A daring faith will inspire the efforts of our fellowship. We shall be a band of brothers animated by the same hopes and living the same endeavouring life. Into that power, that unity, that courage of conviction, may God lead us all.

THE SECRETARY, the Rev. JAMES HARWOOD, presented the report of the Committee for the triennial period 1906-9 (appended to this account of the meeting), noting that in the printed list at the end (not reproduced here), *Whitby* should go into the group of unattached churches, and *Aberystwyth* under the South Wales Association.

MR. J. W. SCOTT, as treasurer, presented the accounts, showing a balance of £29, but subscriptions from only 152 congregations of the 374 on the roll, and from only 9 of the 24 societies and associations. He strongly urged that all the churches should make some contribution to the common cause.

THE PRESIDENT moved, and the Rev. F. K. FREESTON seconded the reception of the report, and then a series of resolutions adopting various recommendations of the report were moved from the chair and seconded by members as follows:—

(1) Seconded by the Rev. DENDY AGATE, accepting the recommendation as to Advisory Committees. It was explained in answer to the Rev. Ph. Moore that they were recommendations made after consulting the associations concerned.

(2) Seconded by the Rev. J. C. HIRST, as to a Ministerial Settlements Board, Mr. Hirst insisted that some more orderly plan was necessary. This had been proved by the experience of the Settlements Bureau in connection with the Ministerial Fellowship. One difficulty in their way was the unwillingness of congregations to submit to anything they thought to be interference. Some resented it even when information was given them; yet the fact remained that they had systematically put before congregations the desirability of avoiding those disgraceful "preaching competitions," which had so often wounded the self-respect of ministers, and done so much harm to congregations; and that was an exceedingly good thing.

(3) Seconded by Mr. T. FLETCHER ROBINSON, the last recommendation on the supply of ministers, as to the probationary training of lay-workers. Some objection to this was made by Mr. CAPLETON and Mr. JOHN HEXS, but it was pointed out that lay-workers themselves had desired opportunities for such training, and there was



no desire to hinder any lay-worker of standing whom a congregation might call to its ministry.

(4) Seconded by the Rev. C. J. STREET, as to the roll of ministers, recommending that the Committee be authorised "to enter into communication with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the Ministerial Fellowship with a view to united action in the preparation, revision, and annual publication of a Ministerial Roll." Mr. Street pointed out that the Conference had a roll of churches, but not a roll of ministers. As a member of the Committees, both of the Conference and the B. and F.U.A. and Secretary of the Fellowship, he seconded the recommendation.

Mr. J. C. WARREN objected that the work of a ministerial roll was already admirably done by the editor of the "Essex Hall Year Book," and there was no good reason for taking it out of his hands. The Rev. A. A. CHARLESWORTH made a further objection, and Mr. JOHN HARRISON pointed out that the resolution was simply for consultation with the bodies named with a view to united action, and he supported the resolution.

Dr. CARPENTER said that as a Conference their roll of ministers at present depended on the appearance of their names in the "Essex Hall Year Book," for which they had no responsibility. Clearly they ought to have a roll of their own.

The Rev. W. COPELAND BOWIE said that the editor of the Year Book exercised no responsibility in the inclusion or exclusion of names on the roll; every minister appointed by a congregation was included in the roll without question on the editor's part.

The recommendation was adopted, and then on the motion of the PRESIDENT, seconded by Mr. HERBERT NEW, the report was adopted, and the meeting adjourned.

#### SECOND SESSION.

The second part of the business meeting was held on Wednesday afternoon, in the Mawdsley-street Congregational Church, kindly lent for the purpose.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at the opening of the meeting, until the time came to move his own resolution, when Dr. Carpenter, one of the Vice-Presidents, took his place.

The first business was the reading by the SECRETARY of the report of the Sustentation Fund to the Conference, signed by the Rev. C. C. Coe, President of the Fund (this we hope to publish in next week's INQUIRER), and the reading by the Rev. C. J. STREET of the report of the Pensions Fund (which appears in our present issue). On the motion of the PRESIDENT a resolution of most grateful thanks to the minister and officers of the church for granting the use of the building to the Conference was carried by acclamation. Dr. CARPENTER then took the chair.

The PRESIDENT moved the resolution of which he had given notice, as follows:

"That in view both of the changed conditions of the age and the pressing need of our churches for a closer and more practical fellowship, whereby the strength of the strong shall be more readily held at the service of the weak,

and mutual effectiveness developed in a quickened sense of unity, this Conference, while avoiding any assumption of ecclesiastical authority, and resolved upon the maintenance of the ancient liberties of the churches, is of opinion that the time is opportune for a resolute effort to secure effective co-operation among our institutions, and to bring the churches into a more vital fellowship, and instructs the Conference Committee to prepare and present to the Conference a plan for the carrying out of these objects.

"That the Committee of the Conference is accordingly instructed to consult with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, the managers of the Stipend Augmentation and Sustentation Funds, and the Committees of the Local Associations, by means of Joint Committees of these bodies for special purposes, and in any other way that may be deemed desirable, with a view to a full consideration of all the questions involved, including the suggestions now made by the President."

First of all, Mr. WOOD said, he would clear away some misapprehensions. He was not proposing to create a new central organisation; all he suggested could be done within the lines of their present organisation, the Conference, and B. and F.U.A. and the local associations. He did not propose that the Conference should be turned into anything like an ecclesiastical authority. All that could be done must be done in a voluntary way, and by the good will of their friends. They would not reach their goal except by the confidence and good will of the vast majority of their members and their churches. He did not propose that there should be any interference with the proper and legitimate work of any of their organisations. There might, however, be some need of a proper delimitation. The work was so great, that there was room, and there was a demand, that the Conference should much more actively busy itself with the welfare of the churches, and that the B. and F.U.A. and the local associations also should do more to the same end. The impulse to be derived from meetings such as that might open the way for fresh activities. What he was anxious to do was first to bring their associations into vital union. The one word he would bring to the front was co-operation. That was the vital word of modern life, and it was the vital word for their churches. There was need for more co-operation. They had various funds, which, while they did not overlap, might yet be brought closer in counsel for greater effectiveness. There might be legal difficulties in the way of pooling funds devoted to the same purpose, but not in the way of real active co-operation. Something was already done in that direction, but there were differences of administration, and he thought there might be some improvement of method.

Turning to his proposals of a circuit system and a new *pro rata* fund, Mr. WOOD said he was moved by his experience of the state of the churches. It had been said that he exaggerated their poverty; but he was not generally regarded as a

pessimist. There were large areas, east south, and north, where conditions were found, which they could hardly realise in such great gatherings as that. He did not assume the despairing attitude of Dr. Martineau in 1888, who doubted "whether we were worth organising." He had the utmost faith in the religious future of our churches, and in that faith he had made his suggestions. The proof that they were worth organising would be in the fact that they did organise. It was a sign of life, not of death, that they were ready to discuss the matter. He thankfully acknowledged the splendid work of a large number of ministers in difficult circumstances and lonely positions on meagre incomes, and gave examples, showing the urgent need for more adequate support, to remove what was a veritable scandal. He believed this could be done by the new fund he had proposed, or by strengthening the Sustentation Funds. But in any case, it would be best done on the *pro rata* system, so as to touch all the members of their churches. It would give them a sense of fellowship and unity, which would be an immense advantage to themselves. He was convinced they could get all the money they required, without weakening any of their present funds. With regard to the circuit system of the grouping of churches, he believed that great good might be derived from it. They had lived a little too much to themselves; the call came to them now to live a good deal more for one another. *Together* was the word, if they were to go forward, and to conquer, it must be as one army, it must be together. They must stand together in living co-operation, and he did not for one moment see the impossibility of carrying out what he proposed.

The Rev. C. J. STREET seconded the resolution, as he said, with no hesitation, but with the greatest pleasure. "Where two Unitarians are gathered together," it was said, "there three opinions are to be found." Neither he nor Mr. WOOD had changed his opinion in the matters under discussion, but in the greater part they were agreed, while on certain points they differed; but not on that resolution. They desired that something should be done in the direction of greater co-ordination and co-operation. He was as much opposed as ever to the Conference becoming either an ecclesiastical authority or a financial power. The first was disowned in the resolution and repudiated by Mr. WOOD; and as to the financial power, he wanted to say, there was no definite proposal before them, and until that was the case there need be no division among them. They wanted to go as far as possible together. His own strong feeling was that the Conference should never handle large funds. It has had the greatest difficulty in getting enough money to pay its own way, and for his own part he was not at all sure that a paid secretary was necessary. The less officialism about the Conference the better. It was a *Conference*, and as such was most valuable. It should remain a Conference and be content with calling them together for consultations on matters affecting their churches, to stimulate and originate good work, as it had already done. But as soon as grants and doles became



permanent, then he believed its value as a Conference would be doomed. The Conference was established by the B. & F.U.A., and it must not try to supplant its mother. He desired to see the B. & F.U.A. the executive arm of the Conference, and he was perfectly content with the American solution. There was no difficulty there between the National Conference and the A.U.A. If they could find the same solution, then they would be happy. They were all convinced that there must be co-operation and not rivalry between their institutions, and the resolution made for mutual understanding, and the defining of functions, and then they must work amicably together. There was already a good deal more co-operation between the funds than was generally known. He did not want to see a Church organisation. He was not looking forward to a great church. His reading of the history of the churches led him to dread it. He was jealous of the freedom of their members and their churches. He did not think the independent system had broken down to the extent that Mr. Wood suggested. But if there was to be at any time a church organisation, what he should desire to see was a Unitarian Church. Even the President had used the expression "every Unitarian Church." There was no such noble name that could be attached to the Church as that of *Unitarian*. There was no such comprehensive name, not even *Christian*. It signified unity, divine and human unity, and was the noblest name of all. Some of their Free Catholic friends were unconsciously working to that end. Most of them would not have the Free Catholic name. If the Church stood for nothing but freedom it was nothing to him. There must be living faith, and that was expressed in *Unitarian* rather than in *Free* or *Catholic*. If they could not be a Church, they might have free churches. That Conference, at any rate, must be kept free for the fellowship of those who did not care to take the Unitarian name or any other, for New Theology men, or Free Catholics, or whatever they called themselves; but they did not want the formation of a new Conference sect. As to the question of a living wage, he felt strongly, and thought a minimum might be established. Yet there were some charges which, with all respect, were not worth £100 a year, and there the circuit system might help them. They wanted more combination, more co-operation, a quickened sense of unity among the churches generally, a development of their resources on all lines; but still more important was that they should have more self-sacrifice, devotion to the principles and faith their churches existed to promote—living faith in living members of a living church. Otherwise all their organisation would be worth nothing at all.

Mr. JOHN HARRISON, as President of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, supported the motion, with the utmost pleasure. He desired to pay his own tribute to the value of the visits made by the President to the churches up and down the country. He had spent his time in most self-sacrificing labours, and they would bear abundant fruit. He thanked him also for proposing that resolution.

It was one in which they could all agree. If properly carried out it would put an end to a great many of their troubles. All the anxiety which had been caused by rumours about Conference designs proceeds from an error in the minds of some that the Conference sought to be not a consultative, but an administrative body. That he thought would be a very serious thing. It had done admirable work in raising great funds, but then had handed them over to Boards of Managers. That was as it should be, and if it could establish another fund of £3,000, that would be of great value. It was a burning shame that so many ministers who did noble work, had such miserable salaries. As President of the B. and F.U.A. he did not see that it and the Conference should clash. The Association did extremely valuable work in support of the churches. That was a national Conference of Unitarians. He wished it would be a Unitarian Conference. It was a scandal, if they could not do what was necessary among themselves for the promotion of liberal Christianity.

The Rev. A. L. SMITH said that the fact that the Association had called the Conference into being was no reason why the Conference should not take any measures it judged to be wise and just. The Conference represented the churches in a way that no other body could. These churches which we called our churches have their own future, under God, in their own hands. Who is to say what *our* means, the Association or any other body? The Conference is on its own basis, entitled under all the laws of wisdom, justice and righteousness, to decide on its own policy in the future.

Rev. F. WOOD said there was no reason why the Conference should not have administrative functions also. The body which controlled funds, and therefore also churches, should be a really representative democratic body. The aspiration for fuller union and complete organisation would go on.

The PRESIDENT, before the vote was taken, said he very much appreciated the spirit in which Mr. Street had spoken; but in reference to his declaration that he was not ashamed of the Unitarian name, he (the speaker) asked, Who is? They who preferred to call their churches Free Churches were never ashamed to affirm themselves to be Unitarians, and that kind of remark (his reference was not to Mr. Street) had better be banished from their midst. As to what was said in regard to the analogy with America, the position and traditions of the churches in the two countries were entirely different. They had their own tradition, and their own difficulties were not those of America, and the American solution could not be theirs. Their own solution would be worked out, but not at once. Yet they were all brethren, and all devoted to the one great cause, whether they called it Liberal Unitarian, or Free Catholic. He did not object to the many names on their banner as a Conference, and they would have to be content with it for many years to come.

The resolution was carried by a large vote, and with no dissident.

The Rev. Dr. J. E. ODGERS then pro-

posed, and Mr. GROSVENOR TALBOT seconded:—

That the best thanks of the Conference be given to the retiring officers and committee, and that the following officers be appointed for the ensuing three years:—President, Rev. H. Enfield Dowson, B.A.; vice-presidents, Mr. Jas. R. Beard, J.P., Sir William B. Bowring, Bart., Rev. Dr. J. E. Carpenter, Mr. Howard Chatfield Clarke, F.R.I.B.A., Dr. W. Blake Odgers, K.C., Rev. S. A. Steinthal, Rev. Joseph Wood; treasurer, Mr. J. W. Scott; auditors, Mr. G. R. Brace, Mr. C. Sydney Jones, M.A.; secretary, Rev. James Harwood, B.A.

Both speakers bore warm testimony to the value of the work Mr. Wood had done as President. If they ever found that they wanted a bishop, said Dr. Odgers, Mr. Wood had shown them exactly the sort of bishop that would be good for them.

The resolution was put by Dr. Carpenter, and unanimously passed. Mr. Wood, who was again in the chair, acknowledged very gratefully the kind things they had said of him. What he had been able to do for the churches had been a labour of love, and it had been an education to him. It would have been impossible for him to do all that work without the constant kindness and help of the secretary, the Rev. James Harwood, and the generous support of the treasurer, Mr. Scott. He referred to Mr. Dowson's illness, and it was agreed to send a message to him as their new President, expressing their warm regard and earnest wishes for his complete recovery, and a message of sympathy and goodwill also to the Rev. C. Hargrove, who, like Mr. Dowson, was kept away by illness.

The Rev. C. M. WRIGHT then read the report of the Guilds' Union, and Miss GITTINS the report of the Social Service Union.

Mr. T. FLETCHER ROBINSON moved and the Rev. DENDY AGATE seconded the resolution of which the former had given notice, viz.:—

That the following changes be made in the rules:—

- (1) In Rule 2 (b) to alter the words "One delegate" to "Two delegates."
- (2) Rule 6 (a) to read, "One representative chosen by each of the Societies enumerated in Rule 7, so that, however, when the representative for one Triennial term is a layman, his successor must be a minister, and vice versa."
- (3) In Rule 6 (b), for "Twelve persons" to substitute "Fifteen persons, of whom at least nine must be lay members."
- (4) In Rule 6 (c), after the words "six persons," to add "of whom at least three must be lay members;" and after the words "clauses (a) and (b)," to add the words "except that when there shall be a majority of ministers on the Committee, additional lay members, not being more than six, may also be elected by co-optation by those elected under Clause (b)."



Of these, after some discussion, clause 1 was carried, and the rest referred to the Committee for consideration.

The Rev. F. H. VAUGHAN called attention to a printed paper containing a list of nine names headed "National Conference Committee Nominations," which had been distributed to some members of the Conference. He did not know who the authors of that paper were, but he should deplore the introduction of such a caucus system into their proceedings. When the paper was subsequently handed up to the President, he said that, of course, the Committee were in no way responsible for the paper, though the heading made it appear that they were committee nominations. The Committee had the right, but had always abstained from such nominations. He strongly protested against the proceeding disclosed by the paper.

Mr. H. P. GREG moved:—

That this Conference deplores the increasing armaments of the leading nations of the world, and specially of this country, not only on account of the burden of taxation involved and the consequent waste of resources needed for the work of social reform, but also for the mockery such rivalry in destructive power offers to the plea of Christianity, and of common humanity for a better understanding among nations. The Conference appeals to the people of every civilised land, and especially of our own, to use their utmost endeavours to establish the just and humane principle of arbitration, to strengthen the bonds of Brotherhood and goodwill, and to deepen the sense of common interests and aspirations between nations, so as to make the barbarity of war forever impossible.

He urged that they had now come to the time when they should drop the appeal to force and rely upon the appeal to reason. They should deny entirely that God is on the side of the big battalions, and assert fearlessly that He is on the side of justice, righteousness, and mercy. And, further, he insisted that the responsibility of peace and war rests not with the statesmen, but with the people, and he quoted Bigelow, "God will send the bill to you."

The Rev. P. H. WICKSTEED seconded, and referred to the enormous power of the Services in forming opinion, which makes for war. He strongly traversed the position that the best way to secure peace was to prepare for war. The rivalry in armaments, in which the nations were embarked, was a process, he said, which Bismarck called "bleeding white," not simply in war, but in the preparation of war. The whole prospects of civilisation were at stake, and the position taken up by England was chiefly responsible. It was far more necessary, he said, to have a civilisation to defend, than to defend a state that has ceased to be civilised. What was a society worth that would have no confidence in anything but brute force; and he concluded by quoting Juvenal, "It is the height of infamy to defend our life at the cost of all that makes life worth living."

Mr. JOHN DENDY proposed and Mr. G. H. LEIGH seconded the following amendment:—

That while deeply regretting the growth of armaments and recognising the paramount duty of using every effort to maintain peace, and especially of abstaining from all provocative speech and action, this meeting also recognises that it is the duty of our Government to propose such measures and take such steps (of a purely defensive nature), as it may deem to be essential for the defence of the liberties and commerce of this Empire.

Mr. GEORGE ARMSTRONG asked whether it was really an amendment. He thought many might quite well vote for both resolutions. Miss Clephan supported the resolution.

The PRESIDENT having ruled that it was an amendment, the vote was taken, and the amendment lost. The original resolution was then carried, without a contrary vote.

The Rev. C. PEACH moved and the Rev. H. DAWTREY seconded:—

Believing that the continued growth of armaments is a danger to the peace of Europe, and a barrier to all social and moral progress, and believing that the growth of armaments is due to the feeling of insecurity occasioned by the right of capture of private property at sea, this Conference calls upon the Government to consider the advisability of renouncing the right of capture, and respectfully urges that every means should be taken to promote international goodwill.

Mr. Peach said the resolution was not in any sense a criticism on that already passed. Having expressed the ideal, there was an obligation to do something towards finding a way. His resolution pointed to the most practical step, in which England still blocked the way.

The resolution was carried, *nem. con.*, and the Rev. R. N. CROSS finally called attention to the resolution of which he had given notice:—

That in order to promote a sense of unity and community among our churches this Conference (a) recommends its Committee to fix one Sunday in the year to be called "National Conference Sunday," (b) and further recommends that on National Conference Sunday ministers should emphasise in their congregations the need of mutual interest, and the fact of a common mission to the world, such as should bind these congregations together as members of one body, animated by one soul, and inspired by one common consciousness.

That expressed, he said, what many, especially of their younger men, were feeling, but in deference to advice he would not press it now, but left it for the consideration of the Committee. This concluded the business.

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE

*Of the Members and Friends of*

UNITARIAN, LIBERAL CHRISTIAN, FREE CHRISTIAN, PRESBYTERIAN, AND OTHER NON-SUBSCRIBING OR KINDRED CONGREGATIONS.

OFFICERS, 1906-1909.

[NOTE.—Some of the following have been elected during the term to fill vacancies.]

*President:* The Rev. Joseph Wood.

*Vice-Presidents:* Mr. James R. Beard, J.P., Mr. Howard Chatfield Clarke, Sir William B. Bowring, Bart., Dr. W. Blake Odgers, K.C., The Rev. Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, The Rev. S. A. Steinthal.

*Treasurer:* Mr. J. W. Scott, J.P.

*Auditors:* Mr. G. R. Brace, and Mr. C. Sydney Jones, M.A.

*Secretary:* The Rev. James Harwood, B.A., 105, Palace-road, Tulse Hill Park, London, S.W.

*Committee* (elected members): Rev. Dendy Agate, B.A., Rev. J. W. Austin, M.A., Rev. F. K. Freeston, Rev. Henry Gow, B.A., Mr. George H. Leigh, Mr. Percy H. Leigh, Mr. Albert Nicholson, Rev. J. C. Odgers, B.A., Rev. J. H. Weatherall, M.A., Rev. J. C. Street, Mr. J. C. Warren, M.A., Mr. J. Harrop White.

*Co-Opted Members:* Mr. John Dendy, Rev. H. Enfield Dowson, B.A., Mr. Henry P. Greg, M.A., Rev. C. Hargrove, M.A., Mr. P. J. Worsley, B.A.

*Representatives of Societies:* Mr. Harold Baily, Rev. J. H. Bibby, Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, Rev. B. C. Constable, Rev. C. C. Coe, Miss Gittins, Mr. John Harrison, Rev. P. M. Higginson, M.A., Rev. F. H. Jones, B.A., Rev. Simon Jones, B.A., Rev. J. A. Kelly, Mr. W. Byng Kenrick, Rev. W. H. Lambelle, Rev. A. J. Marchant, Rev. J. McDowell, Rev. Charles Peach, Rev. J. C. Pollard, Rev. H. D. Roberts, Mr. T. Fletcher Robinson, Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., Rev. G. J. Slipper, Rev. C. J. Street, M.A., LL.B., Rev. W. G. Tarrant, M.A., Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas, Rev. G. H. Vance, B.D., Mr. L. N. Williams, Mr. G. W. Rayner Wood, J.P., Rev. J. J. Wright.

BOLTON RECEPTION COMMITTEE.

*Chairman:* Mr. John Harwood, J.P.

*Treasurer:* Mr. John Lawson, J.P.

*Secretaries:* Mr. Alfred Pilling and Mr. J. Percy Taylor, M.A., J.P.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, 1906-1909.

PRESENTED AT BOLTON APRIL 20, 1909.

The National Conference has now passed its semi-jubilee. Since its establishment in 1882 many changes have taken place, and no period has been more significant for the religious life of the country than the last three years. The friends of the Conference may rejoice in two or three marked characteristics of our time. The establishment of an open Theological Faculty in the London and Victoria Universities justifies the faith of our fathers, who for more than a century bore their testimony and made great sacrifices on behalf of Free Teaching and Free Learning in Theology. The success which has attended the foundation of



the *Hibbert Journal* points to a growing desire for a more open discussion of the subjects with which it deals. In another direction the interest aroused by the Unitarian Van Mission has shown a popular demand for a religious message different from the one commonly current, and which the Churches of the National Conference are able to deliver. The increased attention given by the Churches of all denominations to the great and pressing question of social welfare is one striking feature of our times. Another is the changed intellectual attitude of the Churches which has practically obliterated that narrow conception of theology which called forth from Dr. Martineau his "Plea for Philosophical Studies" and "Plea for Biblical Studies and something more." No one can have even a slight acquaintance with the living thought of to-day without feeling its intimate connection with different philosophic conceptions. The Modernist Movement in the Roman Catholic Church, and what is known as "The New Theology Movement" are indications of the same desire to break down old barriers. The latter, though doubtless owing much to special personal influence, could not have stirred such remarkable interest but for a widespread readiness for a new forward movement in Theology and Religion which was waiting for a competent leader. In a more concrete form the programme of the Pan-Anglican Conference of 1908 furnished a striking illustration of the enlarged range of subjects now recognised as falling within the purview of the Church. On the personal side the unusual co-operation of representatives of most of the Churches in support of the Government Licensing Bill, and in the attempt to find a compromise on the vexed subject of Education, is both significant in itself and may be expected to lead to further action of a similar kind. If so, it seems desirable that the Churches which compose the National Conference should make their voice heard through their representative for the time being, and that the President should take his place with the Presidents of the Wesleyan Conference, the Congregational and Baptist Unions, and the Free Church National Federation.

Yet notwithstanding this activity and progressive movement within all the Churches, they themselves recognise that they are scarcely holding their own, in respect either of the extent or the depth of their influence. The numbers, always large, do not diminish of those who through absorption in the pursuit of pleasure on the one hand, or in the ceaseless struggle with poverty and care on the other, have neither time nor thought to spare for Religion. And never perhaps were there so many people stirred with real enthusiasm for humanity—culture, education, politics, philanthropy, social reform—who yet feel that they have no help either to give to or to receive from the Churches. Their attitude is not that of hostility, but of indifference. However, the fact may be explained, it must be reckoned with.

At a time like this the Churches, which constitute the National Conference, if they have only faith in themselves and their mission, have a golden opportunity. It is theirs to regard Religion, not as a rival seeking to suppress other natural

interests, but as the inspiration and complement of them all. The needs and aspirations of the soul are constant, and can only be answered by a faith which rests on the religious interpretation of life. This faith, however, is not fixed, but grows with man's growth. Let the Churches whose very constitution provides for this growth use the liberty they inherit to adapt their methods as well as their beliefs to the times in which they live, and they may hope for better things than any they have known in the past.

During the triennial term the Committee has met ten times, and there have also been several Sub-Committees. At the first meeting use was made of the power conferred by Rule 6 (c) to co-opt the following gentlemen: Revs. H. F. Dowson, C. Hargrove, Messrs. C. W. Jones, David Martineau, P. J. Worsley, and Edgar Worthington. Vacancies caused by the lamented deaths of the Rev. F. W. Stanley and Mr. Jones were filled by the election of Rev. J. H. Weatherall and Mr. H. P. Greg. Towards the close of the term Mr. Martineau and Mr. Worthington found themselves unable to attend, and resigned. Mr. John Dendy succeeded the former; there has not been time to fill the place of the latter.

#### VISITS BY THE PRESIDENT.

The President expressed a desire to visit during his term of office as many of our Churches as possible—especially the poorer and weaker ones—with the view primarily of kindling their religious life, and secondly of interesting them in the Conference and the questions which the Conference has taken up, such as the Guild movement, social improvement, and the supply of the ministry. The offer was gratefully accepted, and as a result every District Association in England and Wales has had the opportunity, which most of them gladly embraced, of receiving a visit of a week or ten days from Mr. Wood. Some congregations in Ireland also shared directly in the benefit, while many others indirectly benefited through the annual meeting of the Association, in which Mr. Wood took part. On Mr. Wood's suggestion that the visits would be made more effective if he could be accompanied by some well-known and generous layman, who could speak to laymen from their own point of view, Mr. John Harrison, at the request of the Committee, kindly agreed to join the President, as far as his numerous engagements would permit. The Committee has received many testimonies of appreciation of those visits from the congregations themselves. The reports brought back have been most valuable, often telling of faithful, effective work in lonely outposts, but also revealing many weak places and checking any tendency to undue self-complacency. The Committee feels that the President has placed our whole community under great obligation by this self-imposed mission, undertaken when he was under the shadow of a great sorrow, and often carried out under difficulties of broken health. Further, acknowledgment is due to the Old Meeting congregation (Birmingham) for its exemplary generosity in supporting with full sympathy the enterprise of its minister.

#### ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND SETTLEMENTS BOARD.

It will be remembered that at the Oxford meetings a paper was read by Rev. Dendy Agate on "Advisory Committees and Ministerial Settlements," and that the Rev. Joseph Wood proposed resolutions favouring the appointment of a Central Advisory Board and of a Ministerial Settlements Board. After discussion it was resolved: "That the paper read by Mr. Agate and the resolutions submitted by Mr. Wood be referred to the Conference Committee, with instruction to consult existing Advisory Committees, the Ministerial Fellowship, the Colleges, the District Associations and others, and that they report to the next meeting of the Conference."

This matter has occupied a large share of the Committee's attention. A Sub-Committee was appointed which entered into communication with the bodies—thirty-six in number—named in the resolution. Recommendations based on the replies received were made to the Committee; were afterwards submitted, as regards the number and distribution of the Advisory Committees, for the consideration of the District Associations and others; were then modified to meet some objections; and are now reported, as follows, to the Conference itself as embodying the careful judgment of those who have been consulted:—

1. That five Advisory Committees be appointed for England and Wales, to cover the areas of the following Associations:—

- (a) The Northumberland and Durham Association, the Yorkshire Union, and the North Midland P. and U. Association.
- (b) The Lancashire and Cheshire Provincial Assembly.
- (c) The Midland and Eastern Unions, the London and South Eastern Counties Provincial Assembly, and the Southern Unitarian Association.
- (d) The Western Union.
- (e) The South Wales Unitarian Association and the South-East Wales Unitarian Society.

2. That these Committees consist of ministers and laymen to be appointed by the Provincial Assemblies or District Associations within their areas.

3. That the Committees be authorised to delegate their functions, or any part of them, in cases where they consider local knowledge desirable—the Committee, however, always being responsible for any action that is taken.

4. That the following be the functions of an Advisory Committee:—

- (a) To consider applications from persons who wish to enter the ministry of the Churches on the Roll of the National Conference, but who have not passed through one of our recognised colleges, and to grant certificates of commendation to candidates who are deemed desirable. In considering applications the Committee
- (i) shall require evidence of educational fitness from all persons who have not passed through a recognised college, or do not possess a University degree or other academical qualification which the Committee deems adequate;



(ii) shall not inquire into other questions than those of character, antecedents, educational efficiency, and personal fitness;

(iii) shall aim at securing, *when practicable*, that full ministerial recognition be preceded by either a period of study at one of our colleges or a term of probation in actual ministerial work.

(b) *When requested by both parties*, to intervene in cases of difficulty that may arise in congregations, or between ministers and congregations.

(c) *When requested by a minister*, to adjudicate on his continued fitness to occupy a ministerial position.

5. That Advisory Committees be urged, as a matter of courtesy, to report their decisions to the Secretary of the National Conference, who will act as a registrar, and be the medium of communication among the Committees.

On the question of the Ministerial Settlements Board, the Committee recognises the fact that the Ministerial Fellowship has already for nearly five years been acting as a Settlements Bureau, the object of which is to bring together with greater facility and more regard for self-respect congregations needing ministers and ministers who are without a charge, or may desire a change. The experience thus gained has been most valuable. On the one hand, the extent to which the Settlements Bureau has been called upon to act proves the necessity of some such medium of communication. On the other hand, the fact that the Ministerial Fellowship is composed exclusively of ministers, and acts for its own members only (*i.e.*, for rather less than one half of our ministers, is necessarily a serious limitation to its usefulness. Further, it has till quite recently confined itself to serving as a means of communication, and has refrained from giving advice, even when asked. The result is that, valuable as this branch of the work of the Ministerial Fellowship has been, it does not meet all cases.

In addition to the work done by the Ministerial Fellowship in this connection, much useful assistance has also been informally rendered by leading ministers and laymen in their several districts, as well as by the principals of our colleges, and the Secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Such natural opportunities of counsel will remain open, whatever scheme may be adopted. But it is within the knowledge of the Committee that some, at least, of those whose advice is most frequently sought, feel the difficulty and delicacy of their position, and would be the first to welcome the establishment of some body that is generally recognised.

Taking all these facts into account, and realising that the work of registering ministers desiring appointments and congregations desiring ministers must be done by one man, the Committee recommends that the Secretary of the Conference should be invited to undertake it. The further and more difficult task of advising, *when requested*, ministers and congregations can only be performed by a board, consisting of both ministers and laymen. It is suggested that churches and ministers should have the choice of consulting either

a National Board or a Local Advisory Committee, and that for the former purpose a Ministerial Settlements Board, including delegated representatives of the Advisory Committees, be appointed by the National Conference.

#### HELP FOR POORER MINISTERS AND CONGREGATIONS.

The Conference at Oxford recommended to the consideration of the Committee the question of more effectual help for our poorer ministers and congregations. Though this important matter has not been lost sight of, the Committee is not at present prepared with any suggestions. The proposals for Church organisation (including an adaptation of the circuit system and a *pro rata* Conference Fund) which the President intends to bring forward at the triennial meetings, are closely connected with the subject, and it will be better, in the opinion of the Committee, to await them and the discussion to which they will doubtless give rise before presenting any definite report.

#### COMMITTEE ON THE SUPPLY OF MINISTERS.

In consequence of a paper (followed by discussion) read by Mr. A. H. Worthington at the Leicester Conference in 1900, on "The Future Supply of our Ministers," a sub-committee was appointed at that time to consider the question. Recommendations were drawn up, but there the matter rested, principally, it would seem, owing to the fact that at that time the Conference had not a secretary who could be expected to undertake the correspondence involved. Under pressure of the concern felt for the future supply of suitable ministers the question has been lately reopened. The recommendations of 1900 were considered by the Committee and, with some slight amendments, adopted as follows:—

1. That a board be constituted by the National Conference.

2. That the membership of the board be—

(a) Partly *ex-officio* (the President and Secretary of the Conference);

(b) Partly representative (1 representative of Manchester College, 1 of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, and 1 of Carmarthen College);

(c) Partly elective (6 members elected by the Committee of the Conference from its own members or from outside);

3. That the tenure of membership of the board be—

(a) The representative members to be appointed for such periods as may be arranged with the Colleges.

(b) The elective members to be elected triennially at the first meeting of the Committee of the Conference held after each Conference, and to hold office until their successors are appointed.

The body thus constituted has taken for its title "Committee on the Supply of Ministers." Invested by the Conference Committee with power to add to its numbers, it has invited the principals of Manchester College, the Unitarian Home Missionary College, and Carmarthen College to become *ex-officio* members. The

first and last named have accepted the invitation. The Ministerial Fellowship has also, by request, appointed a representative.

Naturally there are fluctuations in the supply of students, and at the present moment the numbers at both Oxford and Manchester happen to be considerably above the average. But many important matters remain to be dealt with, and it is hoped that the Committee which, so far has been chiefly engaged in gathering preliminary information, will be able to give material assistance in the solution of one of our main problems.

On one subject, however, which has been brought to its attention the Committee is prepared with the approval of the Conference to take immediate action. From time to time men desire to enter the ministry who possess many essential qualifications for the work, and yet have not had any systematic preparation, and for various reasons are unable to avail themselves of an ordinary college course. At present they generally accept probationary appointments as lay workers for a term of not less than three years, and then may be recognised as full ministers. The Committee recommends that during this probationary period they should be required to take a course of reading prescribed with the kind help, it is hoped, of the authorities of the colleges at Oxford and Manchester, and should present themselves for an annual examination to a board appointed by the Conference. Such an arrangement, it is believed, will supply really valuable guidance to the men themselves, and at the same time help to raise the standard of ministerial efficiency.

#### ROLL OF MINISTERS.

The Committee has under consideration the desirability of issuing an annual list of ministers. The list contained in the Essex Hall Year Book, edited for many years with great care, has been of much practical value. But in a matter which experience proves is sometimes delicate and difficult, and which so closely concerns our churches, it seems fitting that their recognised organ should have a voice. Moreover, ministers themselves form a profession, and like the great professions of law and medicine, have a direct interest in upholding their corporate character. The Conference, therefore, is recommended to authorise the Committee to enter into communication with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the Ministerial Fellowship with a view to united action in the preparation, revision, and annual publication of a ministerial roll. With a common desire, on the one hand, to maintain the traditional openness of our ministry to all duly qualified candidates, and, on the other, to keep out those who are not qualified, there should be no difficulty in arriving at a generally satisfactory arrangement.

#### PROPOSED CONSULTATION BOARD.

In the report of the last Committee an account was given of the endeavour that was being made to establish a Consultation Board with a view of assisting "the several trusts and societies in the administration of their funds by providing a means for the interchange of information



and mutual counsel." Though that could not be carried through, the object aimed at was, to some extent, reached, inasmuch as there is now more inter-communication than formerly was the case between the managers of trust funds. A list of such funds, valuable for reference, has been prepared.

#### CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

With the view of calling attention to the organisation of our congregations and the basis of their membership, and of ascertaining what methods are found to work best in practice, the Committee sent to each congregation the following list of questions :

Exact title of building or congregation.

1. Do you keep a register of members ?
2. What are the conditions of membership as to—

- (a) Age.
- (b) Subscription.
- (c) Character, &c.

3. Is it necessary for persons seeking membership to be accepted by the committee or congregation ?

4. Is any special encouragement to join the congregation offered to Sunday scholars or young people ?

5. Have members any defined duties and privileges ?

6. How long must members have been on the register before they are able to exercise their privileges ?

7. When members remove to another neighbourhood are they systematically introduced to another congregation or minister when there is one sufficiently near ?

8. Have you a congregational committee or council, and if so how is it chosen ?

9. Is the minister an ex-officio member ?

10. Is the succession of trustees maintained by co-optation, or selection by the congregation ?

11. In important matters, such as the election of minister, does the decision rest with the congregation, committee, or trustees ?

12. Have you any further information to give, or any suggestions to offer ?

The answers received will be summarised in a paper to be read at Bolton, when it is expected that useful information and suggestions will be elicited.

#### CONFERENCE ROLL.

Applications to be placed on the roll of the Conference have been received from the congregations of Lower Mosley-street Sunday School (Manchester), Garston, St. Helens, Blackburn, and Ansdell, and have been acceded to by the Committee. On the other hand, the congregations at Hyson Green (Nottingham), Rhydypark, Boston Mills, Weymouth, Paisley, Kilmarnock, Longton, Ballymena, and Limavady disappear from the roll, having ceased to exist—most of them many years ago. In several cases congregations belong to more than one District Association or Provincial Assembly. The Committee has decided that they shall appear under each one, and in this form the list will be found at the end of the report.

#### FINANCE.

At the Oxford Conference the following resolution was unanimously carried, on the motion of Mr. Howard Chatfield Clarke, seconded by the Rev. Chas. Hargrove :—

"That the congregations on the roll be urgently requested to make an annual contribution towards meeting the ordinary expenses of the Conference."

An appeal was accordingly sent out, with the result that in 1906-7, 107 congregations and 5 District Associations contributed £162 12s. 5d.; in 1907-8 129 congregations and 6 District Associations contributed £158 11s. 9d.

These amounts have been supplemented by several kind private subscriptions, but the financial condition of the Conference cannot be considered satisfactory until every congregation and District Association contributes, and thus provides the moderate sum (about £250 per annum) required for the ordinary working expenses. Many of them do their share well, and even more than their share ; if only the rest will do their part no burden will be felt by any.

#### DEPUTATIONS, &c.

Since the last report the International Council of Unitarian and other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers has met at Boston. Most successful and stimulating meetings were held, and, through the fund generously organised by Dr. Herbert Smith, a larger number of our ministers was enabled to visit America than has probably been there during the whole of its previous history. The Conference was officially represented by Sir. Wm. B. Bowring, Bart., and Mr. J. Harrop White. Letters of greeting and sympathy have been sent to the annual meetings of Protestantenbond in Holland in reply to invitations to send a visitor. The Conference has also been represented at the anniversary and provincial meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, at several District Association annual meetings, and some congregational bi-centenary celebrations. As far as possible the Committee is always glad, when invited, to be thus represented, and so to keep in touch with its constituents. It sent a representative to "The Cry of the Children" Committee, and to the International Peace Congress, while two of its members have been placed on the National Council of Peace Societies. The Committee adopted resolutions in connection with the Hague Conference, and in support of the Government Licensing Bill of 1908.

During its term of office the Committee has had to mourn the loss of four of its members. Mr. Alfred W. Worthington for twenty-three years one of the hon. secretaries, and at the time of his death a vice-president, had through a long life served with rare devotion the congregations and interest for whose welfare the Conference exists. The Rev. Frank W. Stanley, an hon. secretary for several years, was esteemed highly for his own sake and for his work's sake. Mr. Wm. Wallace Bruce, widely known and honoured for his public services and personal worth, was always loyal to the religious principles which were held by conviction as well as inheritance. Mr. Charles W. Jones, a man of high character, wide influence, and generous enthusiasm, who is sorely missed in many ways and places, has left a memory which will long be cherished in the churches which he loved so much. The truest honour that can be paid to these friends and to many others who have passed away from our fellowship on earth, is with

renewed zeal and devotion to go forward with the work which won their allegiance. So shall the memory of the just be blessed.

#### CROMWELL'S BIRTHDAY, APRIL 25.

So quiet ! How the river wends its way  
By rushy banks as on his natal day.  
Up from Ouse Bridge still slopes the quiet street

Of the dull town in which his heart first beat.

The Church's register that birth records,  
And party-hate hath added sland'rous words ;

Though little recks he in his sacred rest  
That petty malice termed him "England's pest." \*

Yonder's the school, "with shining morning face,"

In that old Norman room he took his place :  
In those green fields with careless heart he play'd

Or, thoughtful, by the placid river stray'd ;  
And, looking Eastward, mark'd where now as then

An oozy blackness shows the distant fer.—  
With intervals at Cambridge, and to crown  
His country breeding, residence in town  
Here grew to lusty manhood's full estate  
Farmer, and Squire, and County Magistrate.  
Here faithful found, in local matters just,  
His growing fame secured a higher trust :  
Call'd to the Senate for his native town  
He dares a baffled monarch's gath'ring frown.

Presage of conflict in the coming years,  
Of that death agony, and blood, and tears ;

But hush ! Not yet ! the river wends its way

Placid and still as on his natal day.

CLEMENT E. PIKE.

As that love dwelt in Christ, and through him brought the touch of Divine sympathy and compassion visibly upon the world, so must it dwell in the disciple ; and thus love becomes the mark of a true Christendom. Love is of God, and he who has love dwells in God, and God in him. In proportion as love takes possession of us we see the deep things of God ; but he that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. Revelation is made only by the entrance of the divine spirit within the field of our consciousness ; and if through self-will and presumption we bar the door of our hearts against this Spirit, we shall vainly seek to approach God by the path of speculation or of dogma. No man has ever seen God, for how can the finite mind traverse the infinite, or comprehend what only eternal ages can disclose ? And yet that mysterious Presence may abide with us, and he can make himself known by the Spirit which he gives us. It is in this sense that the Apostle prays that the love of God may be with the disciples at Corinth, declaring itself in tranquility of mind, in the sacrifice of self-will, in heavenly affections, in detachment of the heart from worldly things, in mutual service and forbearance, in the redeeming power of a holy compassion.—James Drummond.

\* In the register of All Saints' Church, which contains the entry of his birth, has been added "England's plague for five years."



## THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS. CHURCH METHODS IN THE NEW AGE.

BRETHREN,—In the honourable position to which you have called me, as President of one of the freest and simplest church assemblies in the world, I desire to assert my entire, whole-hearted devotion both to its freedom and its simplicity. I emphasise the words "free" and "simple" because they are significant of much in the realm of religion. Freedom means that we are untrammelled by any other authority than that of Reason, Conscience and Goodwill, that all the windows are open to the light of heaven, and that no synod, no conclave, no, nor any general agreement can ever settle for our churches a scheme or statement of belief to which all must conform for recognition. The mere discussion of any such proposal in an assembly such as this is inconceivable. And "simple" means that in the matter of organisation we prefer, to the vast and cumbrous apparatus in which the spiritual forces of religion have been so long and so widely encased, that which grows up naturally out of the needs of the time and can be easily discarded when these needs either change their aspect or no longer exist. Strange as it may appear to some of you, I am for keeping that simplicity of organisation inviolate. I would only change its form. If any man among us could be found who wished it, the setting up of any kind of ecclesiastical authority in our midst is impossible. No one more rejoices in that impossibility than I. I prize our peculiar distinction since it enables us, or should, to give a quick response to growing revelations of Truth, and to move lightly to the impulse of the developing life around and within, with no clumsy, crushing mechanism to hinder us. I thank God that as churches we above all others are free to devote our whole strength to the loosening of iniquitous bonds, the lifting of the burden of sin and sorrow, the bettering of human conditions, and the advancement of the Kingdom of God. We have not to turn aside to defend indefensible theological positions, nor are we shackled by ecclesiastical machinery so that we cannot move forward to the heights that beckon us or the cause that needs us. Our theological freedom, our ecclesiastical simplicity, our open way, our light and flexible organisation, are vital conditions of our existence. And one result of our position is that we are perfectly free to overhaul our ways and methods and to adapt our organisation, such as it is, to the new needs of the new time, free to scrap this bit of old machinery which has had its day and to put another in its place. Some organisation we must have, but I for one am in favour of the simplest that is possible to make our cause and churches effective in the twentieth century.

If I wanted a text for my address I could find an admirable one in the sermon preached at the Birmingham meeting of this Conference in 1885. The preacher, speaking of our churches, then corrected himself and said, "Our Churches, nay, Our Church. We also are one church, though we be scattered over many cities." And

again, "We have dreaded practical union and co-operation because we dread and abhor sectarianism. We do well to abhor it. Its spirit has been a deadly blight on the Church of Christ. But the unity of groups of men in sentiment, in aspiration, in principle, in labour, is not sectarianism, but God's one law for effective and generous work at the hands of men. Union is never sectarianism, be it union of many or few. There is nothing, be persuaded, the reverse of liberal in union, springing from loyalty to freedom, from devotion to veracity, from allegiance to religious progress. Church life on that basis will bear not one mark of the sectarian's temper." And again, "Shame is ours if we rise not up to the magnificence of our opportunity—we of the one sole church, absolutely free and Catholic on the face of the earth."

Whose voice is this calling us Free Catholics? It is not the voice of some firebrand of a prophet out of Wales. It is the voice of one of the wisest of our leaders, one of the soberest of Englishmen—Richard Armstrong. It is his words I made my starting point.

When the wise man of the ancient world asserted that there is nothing new under the sun he did not foresee Christendom, nor wireless telegraphy, nor the discovery of radium, nor the twentieth century A.D. It may just as truly be said that everything under the sun is new, for to each new generation first opening its eyes the wonder and bloom of the world are just as fresh and startling as they were to Adam. The joy of living, the romance of young love, the sorrows of death, do not grow stale and threadbare with the ages. They are as absolutely new for you and for me as if we were the first that had ever experienced them. The eternal and universal elements of life are for ever new to the newcomer.

It is also true that new aspects of life are continually coming into view and old aspects passing away. In many respects it is a new world in which we live to-day, so much so that if any of the great men of the past—Moses, Plato, Augustine, Alfred, Shakespeare, Burke—could be brought back for a day or a year to walk our streets and behold our mode of living they would be strangers in a strange land. In a very true sense it is a new world which each generation makes for itself. Old things pass away, all things become new as each fresh phalanx of the human army passes out into the field. And I do not think this was ever so true in the long history of man as to-day. It is not simply that science, and invention, and discovery, and new arts and appliances, and mechanical triumphs have largely changed the face of things. The revolutionary forces about us which are fashioning a new world, are something farther reaching than the steam engine, or electric light, or radium, or "Dreadnoughts," or a world-wide commerce. Social dreams, new ideas of the value of man as man, new doctrines of the rights of the people—not crowns and thrones, but the common people—new conceptions of the duties of governments; a new sense of the community as a living whole owing light and life and impulse to every lowest part—in a word, that enlargement of vision,

knowledge, ethics and life which attends "the process of the sun," is transforming society to a new basis, and providing the fundamental principles of a new order. Everywhere we find new forces are working like leaven in the lump, new ideas of human relationship, new principles of political, economic and social constitution, bringing a new civilisation to birth. Some have nothing but fears, alarms, and dark prognostications for the result; others are filled with ecstacy and hope as if the millenium might appear on to-morrow morning's breakfast table. Others, alas! are not conscious that anything has happened, so blind of eye and dull of hearing are they, so removed in their sheltered homes from the noise and strife, from the aspirations and struggles of the great mass of the industrial population, claiming their full share in the conduct of public affairs and of the wealth their labour does so much to create, and of a golden future for their kind—so little of all this do many know that they might almost as well be living in Jupiter as on our earth. Then, again, and happily, there are those whose eyes are wide open to the world they live in and to the new life throbbing around them, and to these belongs the leadership of our generation.

This new condition of things cannot leave religion, religious doctrine, the church and church methods unaffected. No advance of civilisation, no widening of knowledge, no broadening or humanising of the conception of government but immediately touches the church. To maintain its hold on men the church must be quick to respond to the new spirit of the new age, revising its methods, reconstructing its formulæ, adapting itself to the changed social order and revolutionised intellectual outlook. Not to bring itself into consonance with the larger movements of life and thought which mark our time is like a shipowner who refuses to convert his once famous sailing clippers into ocean greyhounds. Whether we like it or not institutions have to be adjusted, methods and ideas inherited from the past and which once had a firm hold on the sympathies, the memories, and even the reverence of men must give way or conform themselves to the social, industrial, political and intellectual development of our time, which, in a sense wider and truer than when it was spoken of in the first missionary report of the church, have "turned the world upside down."

Now in one respect we have bravely responded to the call of the new world—its call to the church to adjust its intellectual expressions to man's immense advance in knowledge. Not for us is the reproach that we have looked on science and criticism with a superior eye. In the bitter warfare that once went on between men of science and the theologians our sympathies were with the former rather than the latter. We refused to believe that an ascertained fact or a verified truth concerning the natural world could ever invalidate the facts and truths of man's spiritual life. To the thousand attempts of frightened churches to reconcile religion and science we replied, there is no antagonism. In the laboured and always futile efforts to patch



up the discrepancies between Geology and Genesis we took no part. It is true science here and there had its extravagancies as when it undertook to solve the problem of Being. But we possessed our souls in patience, confident that these extravagancies would have their day and cease to be. We were not bound to a static view of Christian doctrine; not ours was the dogma that all Scriptural utterances were for eternity and divinely perfect, not merely as symbols, but as history, theology, ethics and science. Criticism might shake the foundation certain alleged historical facts, but for us, holding the faith that Christianity is not so much a religion of historical facts as of *spiritual values*, criticism had no terrors. We were not alarmed by the dilemmas offered us that if God did not create the world in six days he did not create it at all, that if every word of the Bible is not true then nothing in it can be trusted, that if the resurrection of the body does not occur then there can be no immortality, that if Jesus be not God He could not have been even a good man. Without boasting, we may claim to have kept our minds open to the new light and, in some measure, to have prepared the way for that new attitude of science to religion which marks our time, one instance of which we have in Oliver Lodge's great book, "Man and the Universe."

But in another of its aspects we have not as yet responded so readily to the call of the new world. We have failed to appreciate the new social conditions about us and the new conceptions of social order which are remoulding all institutions and building up a new civilisation. While our churches are the most sensitive of all churches in their response to the ideas and forces that demand a reconstruction of theological formulæ, in their *methods* they are the most irresponsible and conservative. They remind one of Douglas Jerrold's friend, who refused to look at the new moon out of his deep regard for that ancient institution—the old moon! We speak much of the democratic character of our churches, but we are only half alive to the development in democracy itself of ideas and ideals which the democrats of half a century ago would have repudiated.

Now the democratic movement which came to birth at the French Revolution, and which arranges itself around the sovereign people, first of all laid all the emphasis on the Individual. We all know how powerfully Individualism ruled in the world of politics, of commerce, of religion, and of human effort during the nineteenth century. In its day it was a true, fascinating, and inspiring conception—the duty of a man to be himself, with a vivid and distinct life of his own and not an echo or a copy, the breaking down of the barriers of class privilege, the tools to him who can use them, a free course and no favour, unlimited competition the law of business life, man pitted against man, the race to the strongest and the weak thrust to the wall. All this found a powerful exponent in Herbert Spencer. It was the fundamental idea of the Manchester School of political thought and action. The Individual was the unit of society. Every man must play for his

own hand, make the best of his own powers and opportunities, and learn to value himself and assert himself. Individual enterprise, individual responsibility, each man a complete unit, Society an aggregation of individuals and not a living whole. And all that reacted on religion in its emphasis on personal salvation, in the prominence of the idea that the relation between God and man was simply the interplay between two individuals, that souls were isolated and that between my soul and yours, between all souls, separating them from each other there rolled a "salt, unplumbed, estranging sea." In many ways it was a most fruitful doctrine. In the development of the new order of things it had a great and necessary mission. Our churches answered to it abundantly. Our ecclesiastical system, Congregational Independence, fell in admirably with individualistic ideals. The self-centred, self-sufficient church, independent, equal to its own needs, free from interference, going its own way, living its own life within its own borders and with little sense of life in and for a greater whole than itself—all this answered to the atmosphere of life and thought in which most men lived. Under the régime of Individualism many churches flourished in which now there is scarcely a breath of life. For they have largely failed to respond to the new atmosphere encompassing the world, and since their old Individualism is still strong within them they find it difficult to bring themselves into accord with the new forces that breathe and burn in the life around.

For the democratic movement has now advanced to another idea of human life, greatly needed to balance the exaggerations, weaknesses and defects of Individualism. Democracy has developed from the idea of Individualism to the idea of Collectivism. No one can overrate the influence of that idea on present-day politics and the present-day world of affairs. The forces of association, co-operation, collective life, and united action are apparent in every branch of human activity—in trade, in pleasure, in social reform, in philanthropy, and in public life. The new idea conceives of life in terms of the whole. It takes account of the stability and progress of human order. It points out that the concerted action of the State can do much for the individual he can never do for himself. It is illustrated by the mass of new legislation which deals with questions of social welfare; by the expansion of philosophy into problems of social structure, evolution and obligation; by the transition of economic science from issues of individual competition to the adjustments of associated enterprise; by the new value which we attach to combination in trade unions and joint-stock enterprises; and finally by the new emphasis of all sorts of religious leaders and teachers on the organic life of the church.

It is true that many men have not as yet realised the new conception of life as lived in and for the whole for what it means and all it denotes. A truth, a doctrine, a deep-seated principle, the watchword and keynote of a whole philosophy, may be an active impulse in our midst without our having seen it for what it is with answering sympathy and intelligence. We

listen to its expression without measuring its reach or discovering its significance. Not seldom has it happened that a new order of things has established itself among men before they consciously became aware of its presence. On the other hand, not a few have come to see that to look upon the individual as leading an independent, self-centred and self-sufficient life is to mistake the condition and nature of human society. Nothing is easier than to confound Isolation with Individualism. In every department of human affairs man is dependent on man. From first to last his health, welfare, success are bound up with that of a multitude about him. The individual is not the unit of society, but the family. The great discovery which has revolutionised trade more than all mechanical inventions is the power of co-operation. This does not exclude a true and noble Individualism. It only adjusts it to a larger conception.

Now this new atmosphere in which the world is bathed must of necessity affect the emphasis of religious teaching and the methods of church life. Men are awaking to the fact that if the motive power of religion be love to God and love to man, this is not an individualistic but a social motive. The love of men is an organising principle, while the self-seeking of pure Individualism leads to disorganisation and chaos. We are beginning to see that in every region of life and activity men associate themselves in states, fraternities, clubs, unions, churches, because something larger than the individual lives and speaks within each of them. The emphatic thing under Collectivism is not our own good but the good of others. In the substitution of a social for an individual end is found the clue to the remarkable paradox about saving and losing one's life. He who seeks as the chief thing to save his own soul is he who loses his own soul. He cannot even be himself and realise his own individuality. But he who takes as his one and only good, the good of the whole society of which he is a part, though he gives up his soul nevertheless finds it. The new conception of social order, the Collective idea translates itself into such words as Brotherhood, Fellowship, Union, Sacrifice.

Religion requires the continual co-operation, the mutual assistance of man with man. There is a life which is larger than that of the individual, it is the life of society, the life of co-operation, the life of the church. He who has never been carried away by a noble enthusiasm for some common good knows not what it is to live. We live most keenly, most fully, most richly, when we go out of self and say, "I live, yet not I but my country, my cause, my church, humanity lives in me."

Now that idea is an organising idea. It is the secret of the desire and felt need for a closer and more practical fellowship of churches with each other which all the free religious communities of our country are feeling after. The old individualistic conception of the church, each little community sufficient for itself, hugging jealously its own independence, no longer fits into the framework of our social order. At the present moment we



are suffering from the fact that we have not waked up to this aspect of the new world and the new age. We do not see that the old theory of congregational independence—the “apotheosis of the single church”—has, in practice, completely broken down. Much of its machinery is hopelessly out of date. To some of us the conviction has come home with overwhelming force that unless we join hands we are doomed. In a collective age our church methods must answer to the thought of the time. We cannot be independent of one another. Our various separate communities are members of a body, the joints, the limbs, the organs, the nerves of a titanic whole. In that whole there are diversities of gifts and operations; in that whole the individual has his own distinct place and life; yet, serving the whole he lives an ampler life than is possible as a mere individual. Something larger than the individual lives and speaks within him. The conception of the church as a whole, of a collective life more vital than that of the individual, formulates a principle which is at the heart of present day civilisation in every direction—domestic, social, industrial, and civil.

Is it possible, is it wise, for our churches to try and escape the ideas and forces which are moving in all the world around? There are highly organised churches in our midst which we have been accustomed to look upon as examples to be avoided, and in that I heartily agree. We have contrasted our freedom with their bondage, our elasticity with their rigid limitations, the healthy dominance of our laity with the unhealthy dominance of their clericalism, our liberty of inquiring and prophesying with their submission to authority, and so on, pursuing the contrast in many directions, always to their confusion and our own gratification. Who is not familiar with that kind of talk and what thoughtful man among us is not a little sick of it? It is true, nevertheless, that these highly organised churches furnish a very good reason why we should be reluctant to surrender one shred of our independence for the advantage to be gained by a combination such as theirs. The dread of organised authority in religious matters is a very wholesome dread. Yet it must be remembered that there are combinations and combinations. Is there no other Church union possible except on a basis of authority? Is it not possible for free men to combine that the cause of true freedom may be better served? I say true freedom, for the kind of freedom and independence we have magnified issues every now and then in something like anarchy. There are anarchists in religion as well as in the State. The liberty of each church to do exactly as it pleases, without reference to the interests of the whole, is a liberty which ought to be restricted. That this can be done apart from theological agreement and while retaining a large and ample measure of congregational independence, is my firm conviction. But that we can go on much longer with that spurious freedom and that caricature of independence which owns no obligation to the whole, no deference due to the expressed wishes of sister churches, no ligaments

joining it by fellowship with other members of the body of Christ, no method of excluding undesirables from the pulpit, I do not believe. Look at the startling fact that only one-third of our churches are self-supporting, that two-thirds are partly, and many of them very largely, maintained by grants and doles! What a farce it is to speak of the congregational independence of these aided churches. Already they are not seldom subjected to that most undesirable of all authority—the *unrecognised authority*. I dare not conjecture how many of these churches are smitten with decay, but I do say that in the majority of cases the reason is to be found in their exaggerated idea of congregational independence. They *would* go their own way; they were absurdly jealous of what they called “interference”; they would not listen to the counsels of their brethren; they would do as they liked with their own—their own pulpit, their own endowments, their own rights, entirely failing to perceive that these things were not their own exclusively, but that churches of the same fellowship had their interest in such matters as well.

The creed of some of our churches might run as follows:—“We believe that every Unitarian church has a perfect right to do just as it pleases. It is at liberty to be as isolated, or as angular, or as three-cornered, or as independent in its action as is possible in an otherwise orderly world; and no other church has the slightest concern in the matter.” Of course, the perfect specimen of such a church is rare; but there are not a few that approximate thereto. The fundamental mistake is in the assertion that other churches have no concern in the matter. But, like individuals, churches can neither live nor die to themselves. The character and reputation of all our churches is affected for good or ill by each member of the community. We all have relations with one another, most living, most intimate, most profound; and no one member can say to another, “I have no need of thee.”

I fear that we have failed to recognise that our churches are the constituent members of a collective life—of a body in which every member lives its best life in the life of the whole, acknowledging duties involved in that large conception. We are suffering on all sides and we know that we are suffering from an illegitimate Individualism, and that means the lack of vital unity and cohesion.

Other Congregationalists besides ourselves are suffering in the same way and are taking steps to bring their methods and institutions more into accord with the needs of the age. Both the Baptist and Congregational Unions are this very spring considering plans for the better co-ordination of their forces and combination of their isolated and spasmodic churches into a large and living whole. The committees of these Unions have formulated plans of co-operation far in advance of anything I have suggested, although curiously enough on much the same lines. I would remind you further, that this is not the first time the Conference has felt itself bound to face the problem. It was at the invitation of the Conference itself that Dr. Martineau

in 1888 brought forward a scheme which largely failed because it was too drastic and too complete. It failed also because while it over-rated the wealth of the larger churches it under-rated the poverty of the smaller churches. A third reason for failure was its proposal to substitute at a stroke the Presbyterian for the Congregational policy. I was one of those who opposed the scheme, but I did not know as much of our churches then as I do now. Twenty years’ experience has made a convert of me, not, indeed, to Dr. Martineau’s plan, nor indeed to any other, but to the conviction that under pure and unadulterated Congregational independency, we are, over large tracts of the country, bound to decay. Like a certain disreputable person mentioned in Scripture, I have been going to and fro on the earth and walking up and down in it, and I give it as my painfully formed and deliberate opinion that not a few of our churches are on the brink of ruin, and are only kept going by desperate and sometimes questionable means. Church finances that are made up by pierrot entertainments, whist drives, bridge parties, dramatic entertainments, cannot be said to be in a healthy condition. Even our stronger churches are not so strong as they used to be. There are not so many stipends of £500 a year as there were twenty-five years ago. We are not holding our own proportionate place in our large and growing cities. London, with its six millions of people, is deplorable. There are large districts in the Metropolis where liberal religion ought to have the best of chances, yet without any provision. In many parts of the country there are new centres of population full of the progressive spirit in which we have no standing. Any headway made in Lancashire is balanced by the decay in East Anglia. In my own district we have in twenty years established one new and hopeful church, but we have closed and sold two others. Under any such co-operative union as the Wesleyans or the Presbyterians, both these churches would have been kept alive—the system would have borne them up. Can we not systematise our forces so as to sustain the weak and strengthen the strong? I am certain it is possible if there be first the willing mind.

The plan I have ventured to suggest largely turns upon some modification of the circuit system adapted to our special needs. It consists of the grouping of neighbouring churches, the weak with the strong, not, at any rate in the first instance, for monetary aid, but for counsel, service and mutual encouragement:—first, by the interchange of ministers once a quarter, second by the formation of a circuit committee meeting at least once a quarter, consisting of the minister and one lay delegate from each church to talk over plans and work, arrange for help when it is wanted, discuss difficulties, suggest lines of co-operation. I am sure that such a body, constituted under the ægis of the local association, to which it will periodically report, would prevent many a sad mistake and bring a healthy public opinion to bear upon the life of the associated churches. I can conceive it would be of as much advantage to the strong as to the



weak, calling forth in them a lively sense of fellowship and responsibility, developing hidden and unsuspected sources of power.

In the adoption of this system the associated churches would be asked to make two small sacrifices of their absolute independence—first to pledge themselves to appoint no man as minister who is not on the ministerial roll, or who does not come with a college or an advisory committee certificate. For a score of good reasons we need to bang and bar the back door into the ministry. The second sacrifice is that of their own minister's services for the other churches of the group at least once a quarter. I have been told that our larger and wealthier congregations will never agree to giving up something of their own ministers, and receiving in exchange the occasional services of it may be less able preachers. I notice that no appeal has actually been made to the selfishness of our larger churches. On the contrary, I confidently appeal to their generosity and to their sense of the immense value of co-operative church life. The vital principle of church life will ultimately require of all churches that they surrender their aloofness and isolation with something of their independence to found a world-wide fellowship. The church, small or great, poor or wealthy, that has never been carried out of its own particular self-consciousness by enthusiasm for the common good of the sisterhood of churches knows not what it is to live. No church is the end of its own existence. The church is no private concern of individual men or individual communities. All things are to be measured from the standpoint of the whole.

I have further suggested that we should make a resolute and united effort to do away with the scandal of sixty ministers receiving stipends of less than those of skilled artisans, by raising a fund on the *pro rata* principle for providing a minimum stipend of £150 a year. This suggestion has met with a good deal of criticism. I admit at once that some of the objections raised have a good deal to say for themselves. Nor am I so wedded to a particular method of making that effort as to stand up for my own plan if a better one can be suggested. One objection does astonish me. It is said "The Conference is not to be trusted with funds for any such purpose or else it will become a dangerous ecclesiastical authority." In that case what are the various bodies and societies which at present administer such funds? Are they also dangerous ecclesiastical authorities? It appears to be an objection of the boomerang order. It returns upon those who use it. Why should the Conference be regarded with suspicion? One would think it was an alien body composed of men and women out of sympathy with the freedom of our churches. Who and what is the Conference? You are the Conference. The Conference is your own instrument, and its executive can have no shred of power but what you give.

There is much more in the objection that we do not want another fund, but only to increase the means of those that already exist. Then let the existing funds unite and issue a joint appeal to our public to furnish them with ampler resources.

This is what I tried to induce them to do six years ago and failed. I almost went down on my knees to them to make this united appeal. The Sustentation Fund is a Conference Fund. Let that fund be so strengthened as to cover the ground, and I shall gladly withdraw my proposal for another fund. I shall still, however, press the *pro rata* principle as the easiest method of raising the amount required, and more especially as bringing home to our people in the most practical way a sense of their union with others all over the land. The Congregational Union is preparing to raise half a million for this purpose; the Baptist Union, for like ends, one hundred thousand pounds. When I hear of these proposals I am amazed at the modesty of my own. Is it impossible that we should raise another three thousand pounds a year to provide at least a living wage for our ministers? I plead for this even more in the interests of the churches than the ministers. A minister whose thoughts are occupied with the problem, how to keep the wolf from the door, cannot give of his best to his work. The churches would reap the benefit of a more generous treatment of the ministers. Among the reasons that keep many a suitable man from entering our colleges are the inadequacy of the stipend and the insecurity of the tenure. The circuit system will do a little to rectify the latter; the minimum stipend will do something to remove the former.

In a very imperfect manner, I have tried to follow Emerson's advice and "hitch my wagon to a star." In other words, I have endeavoured to link on my practical proposals to the great collective movement of our time, which is re-organising our social order and bringing a new civilisation to birth. That movement is not opposed to the full development of individual life. On the contrary, it is leading men to a nobler Individualism than the world has yet known. When society shall be complete it will perfectly develop the freedom and powers of the individual. When the individual shall be complete he will realise as he never did before that he is truly himself, just in so far as he recognises that he is *not* independent, but a part and portion of a great whole. My hope for a Federated church rises out of the mental and social atmosphere of our time, out of the spirit of our age, which demands that life shall be interpreted in terms of the whole and all its values estimated by the common good.

Finally, let me conclude with a word of encouragement. Notwithstanding the deplorable condition of some of our churches, notwithstanding our numerical weakness and the difficulties that beset our progress, I am not in the least pessimistic about our churches as a whole. They have a future more fruitful and powerful than their past if they will only awake to the new conditions of the new times and realise their true mission. Nor am I the least discouraged for our Free Churches because an enormous majority of the Christian world is intellectually against them. That we are in a minority is no reason for silence about our convictions or for hopelessness about our cause. Brethren, in spite of the melancholy descriptions of our plight, which

every now and then in an access of self-depreciation and in penance for our sins we publish to the world, we sacrifice ourselves to no lost cause, we lead no forlorn hope, we are consecrated to no decaying faith. The future is with us; the moral impetus of the world is on our side; the power of our churches is not exhausted, nor is their message. The springs at which our fathers quenched their thirst are still full of water. Ours, too, are the immeasurable hopes of the kingdom, and the gifts and presence of the living God. No doubt we need many things, and I have not been slow on occasions to point out our defects both in conception and in service. We need this and we need that. But let us count over what we have—a message of glad tidings for all the world, a gospel of universal significance which can never grow old, unbounded sources of power at our call, in the sanctities of faith and prayer, the wider sympathies, the larger hopes, and the unfolding revelations of God, which the years bring with them in their train, the inspiration Christ continues to be unto us in his intense, marvellous, unwavering consciousness of God. On the other hand, creeds in which men were once content to dwell are by greater and greater numbers found to be too narrow for the soul's resting-place. The social and intellectual movement of our times, all the new forces in society beating out their music, with many a discord it may be but with many a new and wondrous development, offer a field peculiarly favourable to the genius of our churches. "Angels, Principalities and Powers in heavenly places" are with us. Why then should we be dismayed? If the life of our churches is languid and torpid it is not because opportunity fails, nor because God's gifts are withdrawn, but only because we have failed to lay conquering hands upon them. What, then, is wanted? A simpler devotion, a more receptive heart, a profounder spiritual life. Winter has been too long with us. Let the spirit of hope and faith be to us as the spirit of spring, melting the snows on the lofty hills and filling the stony river beds with running waters that bring verdure and beauty wherever they flow.

#### A PRACTICAL IDEALISM.\*

BY THE REV. SAMUEL A. ELIOT, D.D.

"I will bring thy seed from the east and gather thee from the west. In paths they have not known will I lead them; I will make darkness light before them and crooked places straight. These things will I do and I will not forsake them."—ISAIAH xliii. 5, xlii. 16.

A FUNDAMENTAL distinction between men is that some see facts and some see what facts stand for and represent and predict. Knowledge is turned into power when sight is turned into insight. It is the sense of expectation that distinguishes mankind from the rest of the animal creation. The eyes of an animal are the instruments of instinct or the servants of appetite. The eyes of a man are the windows of a spirit. To the hawk all the earth is a barnyard,

\* The sermon preached in the Bolton Town Hall at the religious service of the National Conference on Thursday morning, April 22.



and all the sea a fish pond. A man, though his feet be planted in the dust of common things, by the power of insight and foresight pierces to the invisible. Our senses stare at nature, the trained mind looks and finds laws that are good for soul and body to obey, the receptive spirit reads and interprets and enjoys beauty, and secures wisdom.

It is the sense of expectation which distinguishes our Christian heritage from the other great religious systems. The other faiths of the world get hold of the same fundamental principles, but they do not permit them to lead out into any large and inspiring hope. I read the strange and varied stories of the ancient faiths of the world, and find them all unilluminated by any sense of prophecy. Relentless doom overshadows the Mohammedan, a lazy Nirvana enervates the Hindoo, but when we pass to the mighty Hebrew prophets, to the Christian apostles—how different the atmosphere. These men are awake, strong and sure run the great lines of their thought—no fluctuations, no hesitation, no incoherency, no standing still, but steady, assured advance towards a distinguishable goal, toward a hope that grows ever fairer, a promise that waxes ever stronger. Here are no vague dreams, no insecurity of footing, no doubtfulness of touch. Here is the assurance of people who walking in darkness have seen a great light, who believe that the crooked shall be made straight and rough places plain, and the glory of Jehovah revealed, if not to them, at least to their happier descendants.

How the same assurance rings through all the sayings of the great religious leaders of men. Always are they "forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forward to the things that are before." Always the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed,—always the earnest expectation of creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

We of the free churches affiliated in this Conference share in these presumptuous hopes. We may well cherish large expectation of Divine surprise. We are indeed sometimes derided because we do not become a great denomination, with our colleges and hospitals, our abundant missions at home and abroad, our thousands of adherents wearing our badge, repeating our shibboleths, and enlisted under our special flag. Such critics mistake the object of our existence. Such accomplishments do not lie within the horizon of our expectation or desire. We do indeed desire to multiply points of contact with our fellow-citizens, to open ever-fresh channels of influence, to make our ideals of practical effect through fruitful and enduring institutions; but all the varied activities of our individual churches, and of their national organisations, are maintained because we are assured that through them, better than in any other way, we can expand intelligence, enrich imagination, direct ambition, inspire reverence and hope, and so minister directly to the happiness and welfare of mankind. The fundamental purpose of these churches is to upbuild the higher

attributes and powers of manhood and womanhood, to nourish and transmit endowments of truth, gentleness, purity and honour.

Let us never be deceived about the real nature of our business. We are not in the business of proclaiming a creed or upbuilding a sect. We are in the business of diffusing a certain habit of mind, the habit of independent judgment, of manly reverence, of bringing opinions to the bar of a sturdy common sense, of proving all things and holding fast to what is good. We are in the business of building up a certain type of character, a type that is being illustrated and tested in the experience of the Unitarian families where integrity, gentle speech, consideration for others, resolute industry, and public-spirited activity are transmitted from generation to generation. The remarkable record of the representative men and women of our communion, whether in Europe or America, abundantly proves that these free churches are extraordinarily efficient in their power to increase happiness, refinement and honourable servableness.

It is timely and pertinent to ask ourselves why it is that these attributes of mind and character are so continuously and conspicuously upbuilt in the atmosphere of our churches. We shall do well to guard the traditions and usages that have proved their efficiency while we seek to develop new opportunities of service. That efficiency is not in our habits of worship which are often deficient in beauty and dignity. It is not in the influence of numbers, for they are insignificant; or in our missionary zeal, for it is deplorably insufficient; or in our outward prosperity, for that is comparatively meagre; or in our discipline and organised power, for of that we have almost none. The source of our inefficiency lies deeper. It is to be found in the fact that, wherever they are, howsoever weak and small, the Unitarian churches are dominated by the ideals of freedom, by the passion for reality, by the practice of democracy. The men who are trained in the liberal churches learn to think independently, to trust their own reverent reasons, to stand on their own feet. A church that claims authority over the thought of its members, and makes their beliefs only a quotation, cannot thus stimulate self-reliance. Devout members of the Roman or Anglican or Presbyterian communions may indeed become free men; but it is in spite of and not because of, the teaching and atmosphere of their churches. The religious organisation that serves society in eminent degree must give free play to the infinite variety of human capacity and aspiration. It must protect and foster the development of individual faculty and character.

The liberal churches, moreover, put their adherents into direct touch with the real sources of power. They are not entangled in the machinery of religion. They encourage the personal and direct approach; unmediated by priest or form, of each man to the truth. The people of the Anglo-Saxon stock want in the leaders they trust the simplicity and sincerity which is natural to men who in their religious connections have learned

to disregard accessories, and to go straight to the centre of things. These churches further embody in their principles and methods the democratic ideals that adapt them at once to the spirit of our generation. Churches that own the sway of external or dogmatic authority are more and more becoming out of step with the steady march of the principles of self-government. Freedom and brotherhood are equally conserved and fostered in our churches, and these are the conquering ideals of our age.

The past of the Unitarian movement is, I say, secure. Judged by the standards to which alone it appeals, tested by the results which it has sought to achieve, it has been extraordinarily successful. Its fruits have been good and plentiful. It has abundantly produced and nurtured the manly reasonableness and high-minded devotion which are the attributes of public leadership. It has upbuilt the moral idealism and self-contained spiritual power which are the most potent of contributions to the welfare of mankind. But what now of the future? We can look backward with gratitude. Can we look forward with confidence? We can stand up boldly to the test of past experience. Can we front the future with conscious strength and high resolve?

Thus saith the Lord—"In paths they have not known will I lead them. I will make darkness light before them and crooked places straight." The best things in the world are its promises. The interest of life lies more in what we want than in what we have. That has been the faith of every seer and the strength of every reformer. That is what has made it possible for souls who have loved the dear associations of the past to cut loose from it with glad hearts, and tempt the unknown ways of difficult and lonely discovery. It has not been mere wilfulness, but a profound faith, a faith that dared to think of human history not as a great flat plain on which men aimlessly wander, but rather as a shining mountain track up which they are to climb towards the snowy heights of honour. There are many perplexities and problems that baffle endeavour, many obstacles that impede progress, many misunderstandings and disappointments that dishearten. But we who have taken pure Christianity for our watchword, who have dared to break with established orthodoxies and hierarchies, who have tempted failure in a great experiment of religious freedom, have no right to complain of these things. We have chosen to be the pioneers of the Christian army. We have sought the place of honourable danger, and we must not shrink from the perils and hardships of the service. We can make no stingy bargains with Providence. The appeal of our endeavour is to the spirit of chivalry, and not to any expectation of great and rapid outward success or popular applause. Our pioneer service offers no place for those who are afraid of the risks, or who count the cost, or who seek ease and safety and personal rewards. It is for those who love the high adventure, who are ready to trust themselves to stand alone in an unroofed universe, who are eager to follow truth wherever it leads. Our warfare is for those who do not dread misrepresentation and unpopularity, but



who dread only playing the traitor to their own best dreams and visions.

Against the sophistries and cant that characterise too much of the religion of our day we must set a sincerity of purpose and speech which never deals in obscurity, which never holds a double meaning, which never shuns the searching light of public scrutiny but which is always clear and transparent. Such candour does not imply surliness or pugnacity; it is in no sense supercilious; it does not necessarily deal in contradictions. It is perfectly possible to be sincere and at the same time conciliatory. Let us be careful always to speak the truth, but with equal earnestness let us seek to speak it in love.

We must cultivate the pluck and patience, which disregard the abuse of misapprehension, and which cannot be daunted by opposition, or chilled by neglect, or shaken by ingratitude. A religious pioneer must have that inflexible quality of soul that rises superior to all the fear of failure, to every prophecy of disaster, and every form of obloquy. Yet is this pluck no mere crabbed obstinacy. It is entirely consistent with a disciplined good temper towards opponents. It is the cheerful optimism of men who are mastered and possessed of an ideal toward which they must ever strive, who set before themselves a clear unselfish aim, who represent permanent principles. The moral and spiritual inertia of men makes the task of religious reform the test of heroic tenacity. Ours must be the spirit "that rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Our motto must still be that of the *Liberator*: "I am in earnest. I will not equivocate, I will not excuse, I will not retreat a single inch; and I will be heard."

Happy are we that a divine discontent stirs in us, and that we have no guarantee of quick and great prosperity! Happy are we that we are beset by baffling perplexities about our organised life, and thrilled by yearnings for large usefulness! Happy are we that, setting our limited attainments beside our limitless ideals, we experience a healthy sense of humiliation! That humility is salutary if it stimulates, but evil if it paralyses our generous endeavours. We have no right to hide behind our conscious and manifest weakness of organisation. False humility is no better than vulgar boasting. The self-consciousness which enlarges on our insufficiency for great tasks, and which is filled with complaints and forebodings, is as bad as the loquacious cowardice that exaggerates disaster and prophecies defeat. To say that our efforts avail nothing against the citadels of intolerance, bigotry, and error is as false and presumptuous as to boast that they are everywhere triumphant. To suppose that we can accomplish everything we desire is to imagine that God exhausted himself when he made us. To suppose that we can accomplish nothing is to believe that God has blundered. Let us have done with all disintegrating timidity and all undue denominational anxiety. We are worthy to succeed only as we are not afraid to fail.

Not by discovering our own importance shall we exchange indifference for ardour, but by forgetting ourselves, our self-

distrusts, our small use of great things, our awkward incapacity, our hesitating progress in the overwhelming desire to serve God and man according to the measure of our power. If that splendid passion shall but take possession of us, we shall be liberated from the bonds of indolence, from the dust and ashes of false humility, from the fetters of Pharisaic pride. Without bluster or mock heroics, we shall do our duty, strong in the consciousness of holy privilege. Soberly and with clear-eyed vision, we shall believe in our own time and place, and our own peculiar opportunity. There never was a better time or place to live in or work in. We shall stand erect in self-respect, ready for duty as God shall appoint. Then shall the trivial duties of the mechanical day take on new meaning, our unproductive imaginations will grow fertile, our consciences alert, our faith brave, cheerful, and devout. We shall be admitted into the company of the prophets who have proved the reality of their calling, into the secrets of spiritual strength and growth, into the privileges of the immeasurable mind.

God grant, whenever there is revealed to us the opportunity of noble service, that then, like the prophet of old, we may feel the touch of holy fire on our lips; and that, when we hear the voice of the Most High saying, "whom shall I send and who will go for us?" each one of us may answer in modest, manly confidence, "Lo! here am I: send me!"

## REFORM OF THE POOR LAW.

BY MRS. BOSANQUET, LL.D.

So much has been written and said about the Poor Law Report during the last two months that I think I may fairly assume that my audience is largely composed of critics; to some extent, perhaps, of partisans. It was inevitable and certainly desirable that a report consisting so largely of criticism should itself be subjected to the most searching examination and criticism in return. Nothing but good can come from the fullest discussion from every point of view; and even if none of the legislative reforms we desire should be carried out, a great deal will have been gained by the general interest which has been roused in a very important and much-neglected branch of public administration. Nevertheless, we who are responsible for the report are very anxious to see its recommendations carried into effect, and welcome every opportunity of meeting the objections which are raised to it. Those objections fall naturally into three categories; those which are raised against the Majority Report, those which are raised against the Minority Report, and those which are raised against both alike. I propose to meet these objections by giving as clearly as I can some explanation of the position from the point of view of the Majority.

We may begin first with the critics who object to both reports. These naturally consist largely of the Guardians and their officials who are at present administering the Poor Law, and who form a very large and influential opposition. It is almost inevitable that the majority of these should be opposed to change; the

best of them because they know how much excellent work is being done in their own unions, and how strenuously they are endeavouring to make it still better, the less capable because their experience is limited to what they are doing themselves, and they have never realised how very far it falls short of what might be done. And here we strike at the very outset upon one of the great defects of the present system. Every Board of Guardians throughout the country, with few exceptions, is a self-centred and exclusive body having no relations with other boards except when it goes to law with them about the settlement of a pauper, and almost fiercely jealous of anything like outside comment or criticism. Largely, no doubt, this is due to the unmerited and indiscriminate abuse to which they are often subjected; but whatever the cause, it is obviously an attitude which makes progress or reform very difficult. It is true that the Poor Law Conferences are doing something to promote mutual knowledge and discussion; but their influence at present is limited, and the proportion of Guardians actually taking part in them very small. I am convinced that if those who think that change is unnecessary could see, as we have seen this attitude of exclusiveness and its results, they would agree with us that some radical change is essential. We have tried by description to make readers of the Report realise this; unfortunately the readers of the Report are few compared with its critics, and I believe that many of those who object to its recommendations do so in ignorance of the grounds upon which they are based. I will try to summarise some of the grounds very briefly.

(1) Under the present system there is great lack of uniformity between the different unions. In one union you will find the children cared for in expensive schools or cottage homes equipped and furnished in a style which rivals the great public schools; in another, they are left in the workhouse in surroundings unsuitable in every way. In some unions again, you will find the old people housed in elegant little homes, free to come and go as they choose, with armchairs, jam for tea, and a cake in the cupboard; in others, you will find them crowded in large and gloomy wards furnished with bare benches, and with little or nothing to relieve the monotony of their lives. Amongst out-relief cases the contrasts are even more painful; inmates of institutions are, at any rate, sure, thanks to the Local Government Board's regulations, of sufficient food and clothing; but there is no certainty of this for those who are relieved in their own homes. Some Boards, indeed, will make liberal allowances to the old people of 5s. or 6s. a week; more often they vary from 1s. 6d. to 3s.; and that quite irrespective of whether there are other sources of income. Widows with children again are very differently treated in different places. In one union a widow with a child would get no relief unless she went into the workhouse; in another she would get nothing for herself, but 6d. and two loaves a week for her child; in a third she would get as much as 5s. for herself, and 4s. for her child, and in a fourth she would get relief only if she consented to part with her child and send it



to a Poor Law School. Now there may be circumstances in which any one of these modes of treatment may be right, but it is clearly irrational that it should depend upon which union the woman happens to live in.

(2) In the second place many Boards of Guardians have shown an irresponsibility with regard to the persons relieved by them which is quite inexcusable, but for certain conditions I shall refer to directly. This is especially the case where allowances are given at the home. Many of them say frankly that it is no business of theirs how the money they give is spent, nor whether it is sufficient. The consequence is that much of it is going to support drunkards and persons of the worst character, much finds its way ultimately into the pockets of publicans and slum landlords, who are often well represented on the Board, and, what is worst of all, many thousands of children are being brought up in bad surroundings, half-starved because the allowances are too small, and neglected because their mothers have to go out to work.

(3) In the third place, the system by which Guardians are popularly elected has too often failed to give us the right sort of men and women for the work. The majority have been censured for their plain speaking on this matter, though what the purpose of a Commission is, if it is not to speak plainly, I fail to see. But after making all allowances for the difficulty of the work, after paying a well-deserved tribute to the noble and self-denying exertions of many individual Guardians, it still remains true that many Guardians take no intelligent interest in the work, and that many others direct their intelligence to their own advancement and profit. If you will read both Reports through, you will find this quite clearly shown in both of them. The reputation of certain London Boards for downright fraud and corruption must have penetrated even to the North; and though these are extreme cases, they illustrate how popular election is really no safeguard to the ratepayer. Indeed, under present conditions, it is rather the reverse; for the more unscrupulous the candidate the less delicacy he has in making electioneering promises. "More out-relief for all, and no margarine in the workhouse," made an attractive "plank" in the programme of one candidate, and it is not to be wondered at that, in the absence of an intelligent public interest, such promises win the election. But it does not make for good administration. No doubt if any considerable part of the electorate took an interest in the administration of the Poor Law, there would be more chance of getting good candidates to stand and to be elected; but as a matter of fact it is found that in many places only about 20 per cent. of the electorate will take the trouble to record their votes, and those who do vote are apt to be those who pay the lowest rates, and to whom the promise of relief on easy terms is most likely to appeal. On special occasions, when, for instance the question of vaccination is to the fore, or the political parties want to try their strength, a bigger poll may be recorded; but in these cases the interest lies outside the Poor Law altogether. The result is that the *personnel* of Boards of Guardians is steadily deteriorating.

I have said that there is one point of view from which the present indifferent administration in many unions may be excused, though not defended. It is that the Guardians are simply carrying on an old tradition which they see no reason for changing. They are not acting in any way against their consciences, they are perfectly satisfied. If it were not for that perfect satisfaction which is finding its expression in innumerable letters from aggrieved Guardians in the correspondence columns of the daily press, there would be less need for a radical change. But it seems hopeless to get the present administrators even to see defects in their work, far more to attempt to remedy them; so what remains but to endeavour to bring fresh minds to bear upon them or to bring the same minds up to them from a different point of view? That is what both the Majority and Minority attempt to do, though each in a different way.

Another institution which both sections on the Commission desire to see radically changed is the workhouse. It is probable that the workhouse will find fewer defenders than the Guardians; and yet, just as I have met many excellent Guardians, so also I have seen some really delightful workhouses. Some of the small Surrey workhouses, *e.g.*, situated in beautiful scenery, with spacious and well-kept gardens, and under kindly management, are practically well managed almshouses for the old and infirm and neglected members of a rural population. There is little in them to call for reform. But you cannot judge of the merits of an institution by exceptional instances. We must take good, bad, and indifferent; and consider whether it is possible to bring the bad and indifferent up to the level of the good, before approving or condemning the type of institution. Taken in this way, it appears to be only an accident that here and there a workhouse is to be found which calls for little or no change. For the fundamental idea of the workhouse as we know it to-day is wrong. Whether it is a palatial residence such as you may see in London, costing nearly £300 a bed to erect; or whether it is a gloomy old barracks, makes no difference. The fact that to it are relegated all classes of persons needing institutional treatment makes it impossible that it should meet the needs of any class. And it is only an accident that in a small country workhouse the inmates may be practically all of one class. I think it probable that some of the worst results of the system are to be found for the most part in London; but in many of the provincial towns they are almost as bad. It is in London, *e.g.*, that there is the greatest increase to be found in idle able-bodied men and women who haunt the workhouses where there are no proper means of setting them to work. But there are only a few workhouses throughout the country where you may not find comparatively innocent young girls associated in the maternity wards with degraded women only too ready to teach them evil; or where you may not find the epileptic or partially incapacitated condemned to lifelong helplessness for want of the proper treatment and surroundings

which would restore them to a life of some degree of health and independence. And the remedy for this is one which for thirty years has been urged upon the Guardians in vain. It is the simple remedy of having separate institutions appropriated to the different classes who need different treatment. The masters and matrons have petitioned us through their Association to press this change; it is impossible for them, they say, to deal properly with every class in a mixed institution like the present. Imagine the position of the master of a workhouse containing some two or three thousand inmates of every age, of every class, of every type of character. How can he hope to meet the needs of all; to occupy, restrain, sympathise, encourage, teach and punish such a heterogeneous mass of more or less helpless and broken down humanity? But the Guardians won't make the reform, because it involves co-operation amongst two or more Boards, and of all things co-operation is most alien to their spirit. It cannot be done without, except to a small extent; for few unions could afford to have a separate institution for each class, *e.g.*, for the able-bodied, or for the epileptic. Manchester and Liverpool have combined for certain purposes; but they are almost (not quite) the only instances. Is not this refusal to adopt such a necessary reform, one which is so generally demanded by experts, almost a sufficient reason of itself for a radical change?

At any rate, it seems clear that before we can hope to make any advance in our methods of dealing with pauperism we must replace the workhouse by institutions better adapted to the needs of their inmates. I use the word "needs" here in the broadest sense. The need of the aged is for rest and quiet activity; the need of the young is for plenty of food and education amongst healthy surroundings as closely approximated to family life as possible; the need of the lazy is for steady work, of the incompetent for training, of the vicious for restraint and discipline. And the need of the unfortunate is the ready helping hand to lift them back into honour and independence. Now these are functions which call for different qualities in the persons performing them, and for completely different types of institutions.

This is the position, then, which both sections of the Commission present to those who think no radical change is necessary. The remedies suggested differ.

Let us take first the scheme of the majority, and see how it fits the case. We need a larger area of administration, in order to enable us to appropriate special institutions under specialised management to each class of inmate. Very well then, let us take the county for our area, and place all the Poor Law institutions of the county under one authority; at once you get rid of all difficulties of local jealousies. We want greater uniformity of administration throughout the country; let the county authority then be charged also with the duty of supervising local work. We want to get people on the one hand to interest themselves in the work of assisting the poor for its own sake, and on the other hand to be under no pressure to seek popularity at



the cost of wisdom. Then do away with the system of direct election, and let the new authority consist of persons nominated because they are disinterested and capable. But we want, again, both to be in touch with popular feeling, and to ensure that those Guardians who have done good work in the past shall continue their services in the future. Then let the new authority be nominated by a body which is directly elected, and make it a condition that a certain number of the new administrators shall be persons already experienced in the work. There you have in its essentials the plan of the Majority. A Committee of the County or County Borough Council to act as a County Authority, and having for its functions to provide and supervise all the Poor Law institutions of the county, to appoint local committees to carry on the relief work in the present union districts and supervise that relief work so far as to secure practical uniformity in treatment and principles. How, it may be asked, would it differ from the present system from the point of view of a Guardian? Well, if you were a capable and honest Guardian we may assume that you would find yourself appointed without the trouble of an election, you would still have all the work of dealing with applications in your hands, but would be expected to conform to the same standard of work as other committees in your county. You would be asked to take your share in visiting and managing those of the county institutions which were in your union. You would, however, have nothing to do with contracts, and you would have nothing to do with vaccination or assessments. Your money would be provided for you from a county rate; and you would be left free to concentrate your whole attention upon giving real and effective and discriminating assistance to the people needing it. On the other hand, those of the Guardians with a talent for business and finance, who love the building and organising of institutions, might be nominated on the county authority, where they would have a much wider scope for their talents than in a single union. The plan is simple and efficacious, combining a maximum of reform with a minimum of disturbance.

A word of explanation is necessary about the proposal to substitute the term Public Assistance for Poor Law relief. Perhaps there is no one of the recommendations which has given rise to so much misconception as this. It has been derided as a mere concession to popular feeling, or as an actual access of sentimentality on the part of the Commissioners. It is nothing of the kind. It is based upon two very definite and simple ideas. The first is that it is necessary in some way to break with the bad old tradition that you can "relieve" distress by a dole of 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d., and to substitute the new idea of effective assistance. Let me illustrate. In the course of our visits we always took notes of the cases we heard brought before the Guardians, or which we visited in their homes. One of these cases was that of a young man and wife, with two small children. The man had broken his collar-bone and was unable to work. The wife was fully occupied in looking after him and the

children, and there was nothing coming in. The Guardians allowed 3s. and a loaf a week; and the rent was 2s. 6d., which left 6d. and a loaf for four people to live on. Now that is not an isolated case; it is Poor Law Relief as practised in many unions throughout the country. For that we want to substitute Public Assistance, which would take hold of the case properly and see that the family had enough to live on until the man could earn again.

The second idea is, that it is very important to have one authority controlling all assistance which is given from public funds; working of course through different committees, but being responsible for meeting all distress as it arises. It is only in that way we can be sure that the ground is really covered, and that we can avoid cross-purposes and overlapping between competing agencies. A divided responsibility always results in some of the work "slipping between two stools." And the more comprehensive name Public Assistance is intended to denote the more comprehensive scope of work.

There is one other very important feature in the scheme of the majority; and that is the proposal to give a recognised status and responsibility to voluntary agencies. It is an adaptation of the Elberfeld system which would, it was thought, be more suitable to English conditions and would meet and encourage the development of guilds of voluntary workers which have been so remarkable of late years. The suggestion is that side by side with every Public Assistance Committee there should be a Voluntary Aid Committee working with it in the closest co-operation, and recognised as the centre for the voluntary charities of the district. There would also be a Voluntary Aid Council for the county, supplementing the funds of the committees in poorer districts, and representing the voluntary institutions of the county.

The short space of half an hour does not permit me to explain fully the particulars of a scheme which is developed in the 670 pages of the Report; but I hope its essential features are now clear. They are: a complete system of Public Assistance, ready to meet the needs of all who are forced to have recourse to the public funds, with effective help, available throughout the country, and working in the closest co-operation with a recognised system of voluntary aid. We will now consider how this differs from the scheme of the Minority.

In the first place the Minority throws over altogether the idea of one responsible authority; and would assign the work of maintaining the destitute to no less than five different authorities. Four of these authorities are to be Committees of the County Council; to the Education Committee would be assigned the children, to the Health Committee the sick, the incapacitated and the infants, to the Asylums Committee the mentally afflicted, and to the Pensions Committee the old people in receipt of pensions. Finally there will be a new authority, altogether independent of local control, for the purpose of dealing with the able-bodied. The difficulty of this scheme has been so well pointed out by an independent criticism that I cannot do better than quote it:

"The apparent simplicity of the scheme, which is its greatest attraction, rests on two assumptions. First, that the destitute are not a separate class in the community for whose assistance special knowledge and skill are required. Second, that the new duties to be entrusted to the existing authorities are really the same as those they already perform. So that each authority would have a single, simple, easily differentiated duty. 'The education of children whose parents are destitute does not differ . . . from the education of children whose parents are not destitute.' Neither assumption is fully justified. The education of destitute children includes maintaining them and launching them in life. The Education Committee, instead of concentrating attention on the single duty of developing the child, must also make arrangements for boarding in an institution, or else inspecting at home, all destitute children. They must assume duties which are not educational, and, what is more serious, expenses which are not educational, but which will all be reckoned by the grudging ratepayer as money spent on education. Instead of the Public Assistance Authority maintaining several different classes and entrusting the education of the children to the Education Authority, a system already widely adopted, which ought to be made universal, the Education Authority will perform the double duty for a single class. Even so, the overlapping of authorities is not avoided, for if a child falls ill it must either be handed over to the Health Authority or else the machinery for dealing with disease will be duplicated. The assumption that destitution does not create a special class with special problems of its own is unsound. The 'break-up of the Poor Law' would result in each authority having a 'Destitution' sub-Committee, so that the single expert authority would be replaced by three or four Destitution Authorities, imbued, perhaps, with different ideas of the best method of treating pauperism."

But the fact is that the Minority itself, having broken up the Poor Law, find it necessary to re-introduce it in the shape of a "Registrar, an autocratic official with practically permanent tenure of office, within whose functions is contained the germ of the whole of the present Poor Law. He is to keep a register of all cases, to have a staff of skilled enquiry officers, to recover the cost of relief when he thinks it should be recovered, and to control absolutely the action of the various Committees in giving relief at the home. Nominally, he is to have nothing to do with the treatment of cases; but it will rest with him to decide in the last instance whether a case is to go into an institution or to have out-door relief; whether it is to be dealt with by the Education Committee or the Health Committee, or by any of the other committees, and—if he permits out-relief—how much is to be given; in short, he is to take into account all the circumstances of the case, and then instruct the various committees how to act. He is also to be the Pension Officer and determine who is to receive a pension. Finally, he is to have a "receiving house," into which cases neglected by the committees are to be sent, and where they will stay until



he assigns them to the appropriate committee. The Registrar, in fact will do very much the work of a Board of Guardians, and if he is a capable man may do it very well. But a more autocratic administration could hardly be devised.

The re-introduction of this responsible authority may do something to check the waste and confusion consequent on distributing the work amongst so many committees. It can, however, do nothing to prevent the injury to the proper work of those committees which must result from throwing upon them duties quite alien to their true functions. It is true that it would be a small matter for the Education Authority to undertake the education of the children, because in the great majority of cases they already do it, and in all cases they supervise it. It is quite another matter for the Education Authority to add feeding, clothing, home supervision, &c., to its functions, and little likely to add to its efficiency in its proper sphere. It is an urgent and imperative need that the Education Authority should devote its whole attention to improving our system of elementary education, and any step which tends to distract it from that duty will tend also to check our most potent safeguard against pauperism. In the same way we cannot afford to hinder the beneficent work of sanitary administration by burdening the Health Committees with the care of the infants, the aged, the sick and the incapacitated. It will be time enough for them to take new duties upon themselves when there are no slum dwellings left to foster pauperism and illness, no defective water supplies and no bad drainage systems. When they have pushed their work of preventing illness as far as lies within human powers, then they can turn their attention to curing the sick and looking after the babies. It is significant that the majority of the medical officers of health are themselves opposed to having such a burden thrust upon them while so much still remains to be done in making town and country healthy. It is, perhaps, still more significant that the Minority Report itself recognises that many, probably most of the existing health authorities (*i.e.*, those of non-county boroughs of less than 10,000 population, of urban districts of less than 20,000 population, and of all rural sanitary districts) are incompetent to fulfil even their present duties, and that, therefore, the new system would involve a complete re-organisation of the sanitary service of the country.

One word in passing about the argument that it is necessary to transfer the children to the Educational Authority, in order to avoid the "stigma of pauperism." It is really nonsense. No one attaches any blame to the children for being dependent upon public funds, and no one except under the exigencies of rhetoric is foolish enough or cruel enough to "stigmatise" them. In any case they would be as much dependent upon the rates under the Education Authority as they are now. That children should not be in the workhouse we are all agreed, because the actual physical and human surroundings are bad; but provided they are properly cared for, it matters nothing to them what the authority caring for them is called.

The confusion of responsibility under the Minority scheme does not end with the conflicting sphere of the various committees and the Registrar. It is further complicated by the fact that each committee is to be ultimately responsible not to the County Council, but to a Government Department. This involves the creation of no less than six new Government Departments, each separate and self-contained, one of which—the Ministry of Labour—would again contain "six distinct and separately organised divisions, each with its own Assistant Secretary." If the multiplication of offices and officials can solve the problem, then the Minority scheme comes nearer to a solution than the comparatively simple proposals of the Majority. But the end will be better attained by having in each county one recognised authority, responsible to one Government Department, for making adequate provision for all within the county who have to be maintained out of public funds. We may test the point in this way. Take a family which has fallen into destitution because the man is out of work; who under the Minority scheme will be responsible for looking after it? There are children in the family, so it might be the Education Committee; but one of the children is an infant, so it might be the Health Committee; but the grandfather is over 70, so it might be the Pensions Committee, but he is also senile, so it might be the Asylums Committee. If the committees cannot agree amongst themselves it becomes a missed case and falls to the Registrar. Which of the Government Departments will take action if the local authorities can come to no agreement it is difficult to see. But as the man is unemployed, the Ministry of Labour is also responsible, and it is possible that all responsibility will be ultimately referred to it. In that case the Ministry of Labour will become the Destitution Authority or Poor Law Authority of the future.

Under the scheme of the Majority no doubt can arise, The Public Assistance Authority is absolutely responsible for every member of the family; and must see that adequate provision is made for every member. If it fails it must answer for its failure to one Government Department, the Public Assistance Division of the Local Government Board. It will be able to utilise all the resources available under the Minority scheme; but it will be solely responsible for seeing that they are utilised.

I have left myself little space to speak of those sections of the two Reports which deal with unemployment. In their diagnosis of the problem, and in their estimate of our attempts to solve it hitherto there is a remarkable agreement. Both recognise the complete failure of relief works to do more than aggravate the evil; both maintain that Distress Committees have been useful only in making clear the difficulty of the situation, and their own powerlessness to meet it; both agree that the Unemployed Workmen Act should be repealed. In their positive recommendations also there is a considerable measure of agreement. Improved and prolonged education, Labour Exchanges,

Training and Detention Colonies and Insurance against Unemployment, are amongst the proposals of both sides. But while the Majority lay greater stress upon insurance as a permanent remedy, the Minority desire to make the use of Labour Exchanges compulsory upon employers of casual labour. Both urge upon public authorities the importance of regularising their work as far as possible; but the Minority go much further, and place upon the Minister of Labour "the duty of so organising the National Labour Market as to prevent or minimise Unemployment." This crowning step in their scheme is at once the most attractive and most dangerous of all their proposals. There is not one of us who would not at once vote for the prevention of unemployment; but I doubt if there is one of us who would undertake to be the Minister charged with the duty of preventing it. The only definite proposal made by the Minority, the allocation of 40 millions to be expended over ten years' programme, would be very expensive, but would go very little way towards meeting the difficulty. Indeed, in the long run, it would probably increase it. It is not intended that the money should be employed in relief works. It is to be devoted to the ordinary work of the various Government Departments, with the addition of Afforestation, Coast Protection and Land Reclamation; and the labour is to be the most suitable available taken on in the ordinary way, and paid at the ordinary rates. But how will this help the cotton operatives in slack times, or the colliers, or indeed the operatives in any of the great specialised industries? The only step which could make the scheme logical and complete would be for the State to open business in every industry, and run its mills and workshops in times when working meant a loss. In short, there seems to be no stopping place between this proposal of the Minority and a Collectivist system of industry, with the State as universal employer. And if this would really mean no unemployment, I for one should hesitate before rejecting it. But we have at present absolutely no grounds for thinking that it would be so. The only thing we can say for certain is that if the mismanagement or bankruptcy of a private firm causes a wide circle of distress and unemployment, the mismanagement or bankruptcy of the State would be infinitely more disastrous.

Under the scheme of the Majority, the distress due to Unemployment would be met by the same authority which deals with other forms of distress. The Public Assistance Authority would be responsible for organising and maintaining, either by itself or in connection with other Public Assistance Authorities, whatever institutions, training homes, or farm colonies it might find necessary. It would have open to it all the resources open under the Minority scheme, except that of the National Exchequer, and in this limitation of its resources would lie its chief safeguard. The principle of local responsibility is important in many ways, but most of all it is important in this question of unemployment. The two parties upon whom all employment must ultimately depend are the employer on the one hand, and the man he employs on the other. If either party



fails to meet the needs of the other, unemployment results. The remedy when industrial relations are disturbed is, not to disturb them still further by calling in the State as a rival producer, but to steady them as far as possible by throwing the burden of meeting the distress upon those who are locally responsible, and by promoting industrial insurance, migration and emigration, and above all by better education.

Finally, let me urge upon you that whatever view we may take about local or national responsibility, it behoves us to remember that we cannot get away from our own personal responsibility. No matter what scheme we ultimately adopt, it will do little to cure the growing evil of pauperism unless we all and each contribute our share towards the remedy. More especially it is necessary that we should be far more ready to take counsel and to co-operate with each other in our work. This seems to be the hardest sacrifice of all to make. Persons who will devote time and money and even health to the cause, will not sacrifice one jot of their exclusiveness or jealousy in order to fall into line with others. And so the country bristles with philanthropic agencies and individuals, all more eager to preserve their independence than to join in the united effort which is essential to success.

Nor can we divest ourselves of responsibility by holding aloof from the sphere of charitable work. Whether as administrators or as electors, as employers or employed, as teachers or as givers of money, or even as private citizens, it matters infinitely how we shape our work and lives. Even the fashions and amusements of the rich matter, trifles as they seem, for they are eagerly copied by the less rich; and the habit of reckless expenditure in one class spreads like a disease through the community. It will be well to make our system of Public Assistance as complete and effective as possible; it would be far better if, by taking thought, we could bring it to pass that no one should need Public Assistance.

## THE REFORM OF THE POOR LAW.

BY THE REV. PERCY DEARMER, M.A.

WE have had the privilege of listening to a paper by one of the strongest members of a very strong Royal Commission. It has been said by one of the male commissioners that the two members who worked hardest and knew most were both ladies—Mrs. Bosanquet and Mrs. Sidney Webb. And considering the splendid record of women in the succour of the poor, it is no wonder. We are grateful to them for their great self-sacrificing work, and to-day we are grateful to Mrs. Bosanquet in particular.

And how can we best employ the rest of our time this afternoon? Not, I venture to suggest, by the discussion of details, which would require a week for their adequate presentment. When one is confronted with an enormous library of fact and thought such as the Report of the Commission—which is difficult to carry in the hand and impossible to carry in the head—one feels that it is best not to produce second-hand statistics or attempt to do very badly what the Commission

has done so well. Nor do I feel that there would be any gain in adding to the excellent summaries of the Report which already exist. The best summary of the Majority Report is undoubtedly that by Mrs. Bosanquet herself: the Minority Report is published separately as a brilliant document that hardly needs a summary. Our duty and our best usefulness will consist, will it not? in showing our determination to see this matter through, in recording our conviction of its paramount importance. For there is a danger lest the work of the Commission, by its very thoroughness and seriousness, may prove too much for our slothful British public fed up with cheap and sloppy literature. It is easy for people to understand the primeval screaming of the war spirit, and to rejoice in "Dreadnoughts," easy for them to *think* they understand free trade. But the problem of poverty is difficult and drab; the regeneration of a million paupers has no drums and trumpets; schemes of public assistance do not afford bright and amusing copy for the newspapers. The danger is lest the monumental Report which has been given to the nation should prove a historical document in the unfortunate sense of the word—and monumental also in the unfortunate sense.

Therefore, it is of supreme importance that all good men should insist on a broad and thorough scheme of reform. And more especially that we should press the great principles on which both sections of the Commission are agreed; for after all the differences in the two Reports are more as to matters of administration. Where they do agree, their unanimity is wonderful; and they agree as to the need of a thorough change and as to the principles which that change must embody. They agree that the old idea of mere deterrence must go, and that prevention and amelioration must be our watchwords for the future. They agree that our present system needs drastic reform, root and branch, from top to bottom. They agree, and have stated in passages which should be preached from every pulpit in the country, that the causes of our huge disgraceful mass of ruined misery lie in the selfishness and stupidity of our social system, and that we have to begin to cease creating pauperism—we who, after some 1600 years of Christianity, have a million persons in receipt of Poor Relief. They would even agree in convicting me of sin for using the words Poor Relief and Pauperism at all: the very phrase "Public Assistance," brings light, and hope, and charity with it—and, Mr. Chairman, now that we have done with the old phrases, I hope we shall succeed in restoring the word "charity," the greatest of all words, to its Christian meaning. I think if St. Paul were writing to-day, he would add to the sentence "Charity never faileth"—another, "Charity cannot be organised."

Well, the Commission would, I think, really mean "love" when they say "charity." That we should love our neighbour as ourself, and not be content with his investigation and suppression. They would at least abolish that monument of cruel incapacity, the mixed general workhouse, and they agree in

offering us something better than our boards of guardians. Their conclusions amply justify that instinct of the poor—that most deep-seated of all convictions—a loathing of the Poor Law, a readiness to endure all loneliness, dirt, and starvation, rather than enter the workhouse. The instinct of the multitude is often wiser than the wisdom of its mentors. And after all the instinct of the poor was the result of first-hand knowledge and sad experience:—

The toad beneath the harrow knows  
Exactly where each tooth-point goes:  
The butterfly upon the road  
Preaches contentment to that toad.

Poor Law officials were not exactly butterflies; but, Mr. Chairman, it is profoundly true that there is something inwardly demoralising to a well-to-do person in acting as a judge and a divider among the unfortunate. We who worked on C.O.S. committees knew well that there was nothing better to be done, and that those were the only lines then possible; but we knew also that such work sometimes hardened the hearts and dulled the vision of the best people, and swallowed up those who might have been true prophets and potent reformers of a social system they were content hopelessly to patch. The C.O.S. was well represented on the Commission; and few things are more enheartening than the splendid way in which these experts have risen to their great opportunities, and, perhaps I may add, have been at once softened and inspired by their wider survey of the whole social area. Under either of the new systems proposed, something better than the C.O.S. will be possible, as well as something better than the Guardians; and those devoted men and women who have laboured on both, will have better work to do—work, let us hope, that will have no deadening effect, because it will be fired by the conviction that it is helping to remove the mass of misery which has gone on so long unreduced under the old system. We shall hear little more, let us hope, of that type of Poor-Law expert in comfortable circumstances, who rose in fury against every proposal of reform, who was a reactionary at every point, who maintained that pauper children should have their disgrace well rubbed into them, who opposed with determination that tardy measure of wisdom and justice—the Old Age Pension Act.

Still, there is a large amount of this spirit among the well-to-do who have not had the experience of the Commissioners. And I confess that those people—a very numerous, intelligent, and influential class—do give me pause by their strong support of the Majority Report. We might argue about that Report all day; we might urge administration difficulties in the work it puts upon the County Councils, in its proposal of taxation without representation; and any member of the Commission could give us wise answers. But what I do feel as significant is the support which those give it who hate the very idea of reform, and who are quite content to leave the poor in their misery. That Report is indeed a great triumph because of the fact that it has brought a body of cautious and ex-



perienced men so far in agreement; but its provisions might easily be rendered nugatory by a reactionary House of Commons or by unsympathetic administration—and after all we shall not call up a body of Poor Law angels suddenly from the void. Administrative difficulties can, of course, be urged with force against both Reports; but men whose long experience I value greatly, assure me that it would be easy for the authorities of the Majority scheme to carry on the old methods under a new name; that local narrowness, and parsimony, and inefficiency might easily produce so many variations as to shatter the ideals of its promoters.

Remember, this is what did actually happen to the Royal Commission of 1834. That Commission reported against the mixed general workhouse, and within five years the central authority had gone completely back on the report, and was encouraging the erection of those very workhouses. It is well for the Majority Report to demand reform; but shall we get reform from the Local Government Board and its officials? Mr. Chairman, those officials will not suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange, because a Commission has reported. They will be the same officials, who have proved so immovable and so unimaginative in the past—the same officials, who, for instance, have had for years the Report of Mrs. Barnett on the Poor Law Schools before them, and yet have done nothing, or next to nothing, for the children of the State.

Mr. Chairman, I fear greatly lest we may awake to discover after a few years that the old Poor Law spirit had persisted and had triumphed, and that Public Assistance was but Pauperism writ large.

That is a very real danger, because of the peculiarity of our English ways. It is dangerous to start us with a compromise, because compromise is the very breath of our nostrils. Our nation is most helped by a thorough and drastic clearance of the site and by plans for a totally different building. The compromise will come surely enough. You may leave that to the politicians.

We admire the Majority Report, because so many whose experience and predilections lay in the old ways, have gone so far. But supposing it comes only to represent a momentary high-water mark? It is very complicated, very elaborate, very difficult for the man who is not a Poor Law expert to grasp. Present it to your statesman. He drafts a Bill, in which many points of its intricate balance are shifted. It goes before a body of voluble middle-aged gentlemen in the House of Commons. It emerges much altered. It proceeds to gentlemen in the House of Lords, who are less voluble and still more middle-aged. Goodness knows what may happen to it there. Eventually something becomes law which its parents on the Commission would not recognise. And after a year or two his Majesty's judges discover that some of its most crucial clauses mean just the opposite to what their framers intended.

Therefore, bending in humble admiration before both schemes, I should feel safer if that of the Minority is adopted, because it would abolish the Poor Law—not merely lopping its branches, but extir-

pating it, so that there was not a root or a radical left to spring up again. It would give us a division of the population, "not according to the presence or absence of destitution, but according to the service to be rendered." No one would be treated merely as a pauper—for there would be no authority so to treat him—but in order to provide some particular necessity—education, medical care, old age pensions, employment, curative treatment, or police supervision. The children (about a quarter of the pauper million) would all pass to the Education authority, to be as other children; the sick (about another quarter) would be succoured by the Public Health authority. There would be a Labour Department to prevent or relieve unemployment. There would be a new official, the Registrar, to investigate the cases in which any authority gave assistance.

This is logical, clear, complete. It had, of course, behind it the minds of two brilliant economists whose knowledge of local government is exhaustive.

In France—or, for that, in Germany—there would be no hesitation. Logic would win the day. In England it is otherwise. Propound both schemes impartially to an average audience, as I have done, and you will find that one man after another will get up and say: "I prefer the Majority scheme, because it just patches up existing institutions." That is what he thinks—"It doesn't seem too ready-made. We mustn't do too much at a time. We mustn't go too far. Let us just do a bit here and a bit there, and let it all work out by degrees. It will all come right in the end."

That, Mr. Chairman, is what our nation will be saying as soon as the matter really comes before it. That is what it always is saying. That is why we are being left behind in the race of civilisation. Because we are so afraid of being thorough, so afraid of being consistent. That is what I dread in this matter of Poor Law Reform. The country—or at all events the slow majority of the country—will shrink from the Minority Report just because, as a scheme, it is so perfect. Therefore I rejoice to see Minority missionaries abroad. I am sure we must spread the Minority teaching, or we shan't even get what the Majority wants in the end.

For in the end, of course, we shall get neither scheme as it stands, but something different. I confess I should like to see the present Poor Law authority wholly swept away, and the sick passed on to the Public Health authority, the children to the Board of Education. But I think we can all combine to see that the standard of the national demand does not sink below the great principles which all the Commissioners accept.

Great effort, much care and prayer, will be needed for that. We, at least, need not trouble to see that things do not go too far or too fast. The world, the flesh, and the devil will see to that. All our efforts will be needed to accelerate the machine; all our deep and undeterred enthusiasm to press the great need forward and to produce the driving power.

These whom we have to help are weak and oppressed. "Paupers" have no votes; and the poor cannot bring into

politics the mighty power of capital. They cannot plead or press their own cause. It lies in *our* hands.

So for us it is a great opportunity, an opportunity that will test to the uttermost our moral worth.

## OUR CONGREGATIONS AND THEIR WORSHIP.

BY THE REV. F. K. FREESTON.

THE congregations comprised by this National Conference may be called with most fitness The Free Trust Churches. Historically, constitutionally, fundamentally, this term describes both their basis and their usage. These Churches are free with a double liberty. They are free externally and negatively from all State interference as are the Evangelical Free Churches which thus explain their freedom; but they are yet more free internally and positively to progress in thought and spirituality, because they rest on expansive and inclusive principles, admitting of wider and ever truer religious applications. This power to advance lies in their Free Trusts. There may be a few Unitarian trusts within this Conference, but their congregations, doubtless, wish they were otherwise; and there are Free Trust congregations outside this Conference, but for them the door is open, and their inclusion welcome, if they should wish to come in.

This Free Trust basis is no matter of chance, no mere legal convenience to utilise in a crisis, no casual indifference to vital issues, for is it not a vital issue itself! Yes, it is the Church's one foundation, but not, therefore, the whole building. It is a necessary corollary of the plea for religious liberty; it is one of the triple implications, all essential and inevitable, of what we call "The Open Principle." This principle demands individually the right of private judgment and the duty of free inquiry; it demands educationally unsectarian teaching in the National Schools, and open Faculties of Theology in the Universities; it demands congregationally, *i.e.*, ecclesiastically, a fellowship of spiritual unity despite doctrinal diversity, in place of an imposed dogmatic uniformity, or an implied orthodoxy. Which of these three can we willingly cast away? They belong together inseparably; if we accept any, we accept the three. What would many not give, and give gladly, for that Free Trust liberty which we have and hold to-day—Mr. Campbell, for example, at the City Temple? And what have we left if once we part with it?

The distrust of the Open Principle in other quarters is much easier to explain than our own. It does *not* mean mere sportive and speculative truth-hunting just for the fun of the thing; it does not promise an unchartered freedom to believe anything or nothing; neither does it produce the theological libertine. It is neither an expedient nor a pastime, for it has a distinct method and mission, with a deep sense of obligation. It is neither vague nor disruptive, but definite and collective, otherwise the Free Trust Churches, with their peculiar difficulties, would have all gone to pieces. In mem-



bers of those churches it sustains each week, a positive, reverent, sympathetic spirit, an earnest, serious, religious life. Granted that it is a method which we are free to amend, a principle to safeguard at will; but it is a principle to which we are not free to be disloyal. If there be defects in its working to-day, and there are such assuredly, the fault is not with the principle, God forbid, but that we have been clumsy, or lazy, in applying it to our need. If it be contended, as it is contended, that no effective association can be formed, and no church life permanently built upon it, then one must ask, and with no little insistence, where and what is the new, safe groundwork, so effective and so permanent that we must forthwith turn back and disown our very birthright. It is not, I again submit, the foundation principle which is at fault, but the unarranged, unmortared bricks we have faultily tumbled upon it. The need of the situation is not to undermine the foundation, but to strengthen the building. Our Free Trust Churches possess a sacred and precious inheritance "to be guarded until better days with unsleeping vigilance." This challenged open principle has borne a long and noble struggle. It has won its victories in the past, but it has yet to win many more in the reconstruction of the future. To it are entrusted the hope and promise of a United Liberal Church, if not here, yet in America. It is rather too late in the day to question its validity and demand its dying apology. Its value, on the contrary, grows greater incessantly. The great cause of Religious Liberalism rests upon its threefold application for the formation and expression of its own conviction, for the communication of its message to others, and for its communion in a church. Its frank adoption and its further expansion offer the warring religious world alone the cure for sectarianism, the antidote to denominationalism, the gleaming possibility of a realised catholicity, the only way and the waiting ideal of the Church Universal. We distrust it at our peril.

For its chief and great result is *Freedom of Worship*; hence the object of thus dwelling upon it. Do we sufficiently realise where the emphasis of the Free Trust actually lies? It sets apart a certain building for the purposes of religion, and it declines to tie it down by dogmatic restriction or stipulation, and we keenly appreciate the fact that it leaves questions of form and doctrine quite open. Yet this, of course, but half reveals and half conceals its chief and operative purpose. This freedom does indeed enjoin a most explicit stipulation, and in doing this, it also makes three tremendous affirmations. "This building is held in trust for the Public Worship of God." Could any equally brief statement be more explicit, more emphatic, with respect to its contemplated object? For all our Conference Churches, it implies three inevitable conditions; firstly, that our Churches exist for those who hold positive convictions about God, about Religion, and about the Church, albeit these convictions might otherwise be rehearsed and discussed, in book and pamphlet, at home, and in private with admittedly much profit; secondly, that they, however, exist for

those who holding these convictions in private, wish to unite with others in the service of public worship, in a common spiritual act and in a mutual church-fellowship; thirdly and inferentially, that this act shall be left free to follow its own spirituality. Thus the freedom is for the sake of the worshipping, as the foundation is for the sake of the building; each is a necessary condition, but neither has any separate value of its own. Let that be made so plain, so certain, that no one can ever doubt it again. The supreme significance of every Free Trust Church, its supreme meaning and aim, alike for minister and layman, is its provision of public worship to supplement private devotion, its union in common praise and prayer as an aid to individual desire.

Concerning this transcendent fact of public worship, one could say so much which time forbids. Yet one experience, surely, should make many words unnecessary. If you have ever been caught up into its divine reality, you can never put it second to anything else, or dare to substitute aught in its place. The discernment which accompanies it is not merely more devout, but different. A truly worshipping congregation has, for the time being, a unique consciousness of its own. It becomes a kind of organism with a distinct experience other than the sum of its separate parts; it begins to think and feel as a whole. Each worshipper loses his single self in this complete and corporate life, yet in so doing finds and realises a larger self in the divine and eternal life of all. Great is the mystery of sympathy, but great also is the certainty that the deepest revelations of religion, as of character, are only understood as they truly are when they are thus realised together in a magnetic, sympathetic atmosphere, and at a glowing spiritual temperature. The catch in the voice or the hush of speech, the pull at the will or the thrill of soul, the vision of the invisible, the passion for the spiritual, the escape from self-possession to self-oblivion, the leap from earth and time and self into the eternal and the infinite—who that has known that in smallest part can ever dethrone it! A non-worshipping religion is a cold and barren isolation; public worship is the very finest spiritual fellowship. There are little generalities, easy maxims and platitudes which seek to usurp its high place and let us down to lower levels. "Worship God by doing good," "God needs deeds not words," "Let duty be your litany"—all good and true in their pretty little way, but only half truths, surely, if offered in substitute for the august reality of worship. Philanthropy, civic duty, theology, liberty, all these admittedly have their rightful place and urgency, and their contributory part to play, but not in any or all of these must lie our congregational centre of gravity. A Free Trust Church is neither first nor last a citadel of theology, a bureau of philanthropy, a Charity Organisation Society, or a School of Thought. It is a Place of Worship.

And hence the virtual invitation at our church door is "Here let the would-be worshipper feel entirely free to enter. Here there is no desire to infer your views from those of your neighbour. Here you will

find in the pews, not a body of like believers, but a band of fellow worshippers, drawn into this place by the same spiritual needs, expressing the same common yearnings, seeking and raising no dividing ideas, singing the same hymns of prayer and of praise from the most spiritual singers of all the churches. Here, you will find a service wholly free from interruptions of controversy which break in so needlessly upon the devotional harmony; here you will join a congregation living on the conviction that while theologies are various, religion is one and an all-sufficing bond of union."

If anywhere in Christendom there can come about that worship in the spirit of which Jesus spoke it should be in those Churches which, as ours, are free to trust the spirit to the uttermost. Whenever an inquirer asks "What do you believe at your Church?" I do not send him first a tract or a pamphlet to draw him into doctrinal argument, but our hymn book and our prayer book that he may see for himself the spiritual wealth of our worship.

But Jesus laid down a second condition. The worship in spirit must be a worship in truth. Our Churches have always said much about both truth and truthfulness. They have shown a very sincere anxiety about a true theology, and they have bent very low at the shrine of veracity. It is, indeed, I trust, no idle or impious boast that our Churches have not only set on high these twin virtues of religious sincerity and veracity, but have observed them faithfully and practised them consistently. Alike in free prayer and liturgy, in written and in spoken plea, they have striven with pure integrity to say what they mean simply, and to mean what they say. They have been most scrupulous in their avoidance of ambiguous phrases, and often to their own hurt; they have not dealt in the false commerce of a truth unfelt. So let us not hesitate to set that to their credit.

Yet we must not on that account be too complacent or content. If we admit that public worship is supremely significant for religion and life, then the best manner of its culture becomes a vitally important matter. Are there ways in which it may become a deeper aid to devotion, a fuller mode of expression, a truer channel of the spirit between God and man? Bear with me if in the brief remaining time I make one or two suggestions which seem worthy of consideration and of subsequent discussion.

*Public worship is not alone a matter of inclination or holy custom, but also a duty, a necessity, and a discipline.*

Worship at its truest is a spontaneous impulse not for a purpose but from a wish, an instinct of the heart, a prompting of the spirit. Worship-motives have changed much, and in most cases for the best, but there is one insidious self-excuse which keeps many away from service. It argues that to join in the service and seem to pray when not in the spirit on the Lord's Day would be obvious hypocrisy; and thus we are invited to commend frequently the too beautiful sincerity of the absentee. It is an ingenuous, or an ingenuous plea, just as the case may be. But in either case it is false. If the



impulse is absent, it is our duty to recover it, if weak to strengthen it, if wayward and uncertain to subject it to spiritual discipline. Worship is an inherent necessity of the spirit; if worship is neglected the spirit will starve. We say in unfaith that the spirit bloweth where it listeth; but the spirit cometh to him who prayeth, and who prayeth even from a dry heart that he may be in the spirit on the first day of the week.

*There should be more utterance and less reticence about the deepest religious matters.*

Is there any requirement in either commandment, law, or prophet, that no one should dare to speak about religion except a specially appointed man? That would be the priestly notion in its very worst form, and yet it would seem to be the tradition which we are practically following. Not only in service and sermon, and annual meeting, but on every public religious occasion the ministers are expected to speak about the things of the spirit, but the layman is usually asked to talk about business matters and only at business meetings. There is a shrinking idea in our midst that sacred things are too sacred for speech except from the minister's lips, and we carry it out to such an extent that a reserve, almost complete and seldom broken, jealously guards from unspoken expression the inner experiences of religion. We have been inclined to call this reticence a virtue and a sign of grace, but is it not rather a source of weakness? We may talk about a denomination or even a theological position without an atom of spiritual edification. But with whom, and how often, have we entered the shrine of personal confession, or spoken simply and freely about the love of God and the sense of eternity, because so to speak is a help and joy? Generally speaking, it is not the soundness of an opinion which moves us to religion, but its incarnation in the life of a man; and if his life is hid with Christ in God, why should he withhold his word? Whenever a layman moved by the spirit of God within him breaks through his reticence and speaks about the things that lie closest to his inner existence, then his word is winged with power, and there is a message in this soul disclosure which is not discounted of its full measure as with the regular preacher. Public worship will gain more genuine life when the laity take more part in it, realise that the service is theirs and the sermon the minister's, read the lessons, recite the psalms, utter the responses, repeat some prayers. One chief argument for a liturgy is that it does away with the one-man monopoly and breaks through this reticence of the laity.

*Church worship should rely less freely on penitent entreaty, but more fully on praise and joy.*

Penitence makes its own prayers, but praise is apt to be careless. In fact, Mr. Brooke has told us that "the impulse of praise has left us. Our religious utterances are all prayer. We want something for ourselves, or for others. We cannot get out of ourselves into the bright region of joy where praise mounts up to heaven's gate like the morning song of the lark." Miss Cobbe once declared that the Prayer Book had no thanksgiving in it. We have

grown more critical, less strongly emotional; more introspective, less responsive; more oppressed by the world's evil and pain, less buoyant and resilient under its strain. We have more knowledge, but less happiness: more outward activity, less inward vitality; more information, and comfort and expediency, less imagination, less poetry, less joy. We must call back to our worship the old joy note. We must sing "O Worship the King" more frequently, and also "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." We must make our special services occasions of more thanksgiving and praise. Even the Communion Service, with its solemn marks of remembrance, is made too mournful and sepulchral. We must restore its strangely omitted eucharistic gratitude for that life which bravely endured to the end, and by its supreme and perfect faith triumphed over death. Next to the *Te Deum* itself, the singing of which is worth a whole service, there is no song of praise to equal Dr. Martineau's glorious canticle, "Let the dead and living praise Thee, O God: let all the generations praise Thee. Let thy Church on earth praise Thee, the delight of whose wisdom is in the children of men. O House of the Lord's praise! Peace be to them that love Thee?"

*We need, therefore, a fuller, nobler Church idea.*

We individualists in doctrine and independents in organisation need a keener and more vivid conception of the Church as an institution, as a means, and the best means, of realising the highest sympathies of religion. We need to believe more ardently in what the Church can do and be. We lack, do we not, that glad sense of inclusion, that kindling inspiration, that glowing emotion, which so unite and uplift those who look to the Church Militant, if not yet the Church Triumphant. Because that idea is linked with claims we cannot recognise, we are chary of claiming any lot or part in the one Church Catholic and almost seem to prefer the small life of a sect. I protest with all my might against surrendering up this term "Catholic," word and thought alike, to either the Roman Catholic or the Anglo-Catholic, or anybody who would limit its catholicity. We sing of the Church Universal, and we pray for its good estate, but we do not bring down that high ideal into the Church visible and local which, if based on universal verities, may be not only the realisation in part of the one Church Catholic, but also the most effective means of bringing about its fulfilment. The Church idea, in one form or another, has still to possess us with grip and power, so that we lose our protesting separateness, and find our place and oneness in the Church of all the ages. Granted that the Church to-day is challenged to prove its efficiency; granted that it is a human institution, and no longer above and beyond all criticism; yet if, amongst all the institutions of men, it is the most venerable and divine, the most beautiful in association and tradition, the most powerful still over the hearts and minds of men, then the only loyal thing is not to decrease but enhance its claim, to call for more, and not less, devotion, to offer

our best, to give our utmost, to feed and clothe the Church idea rather than leave it starved and bare. How shall we make response to these higher, fuller claims?

*We may greatly enrich our Church Services in many possible ways.*

Sincerity admits of a wider range, and veracity a nobler language. We make our common worship too ordinary a concern; we keep it too plain and uniform; we stint it of historical association and symbolical suggestion that we may escape the snares of formalism. The historic sense, and the symbolic sense, are alike weak amongst us, yet without the first we lose touch with the living past, and without the second we are deprived of many a beautiful thought of God. The opposite of the dogmatic which divides is the symbolic which unites. God's appeal to the soul is through the true, the good, and the beautiful; man's attempted and expected response is not only to search for truth and practise goodness, but also to express beautifulness in lovely and fitting forms. And hence art has been the handmaid of worship from the very first. But we have not yet quite understood this; we are still too much in bondage to rationalistic fears; we are still held back by the Puritan revolt which, while standing out for right, crushed beauty under its feet. But sincerity may take in beauty, and veracity learn to speak again through the truth embodied in beautiful form. I am not pleading for any mere æsthetic emotionalism divorced from thought and reason and conviction, but for the devotional value of the truth we affirm, for the spiritual expression of truth in imagination and suggestive form. Many rich and precious associations which mean so much to others might have no less ennobling and compelling force for us if we would only give them place in our church devotions and church buildings. We have lived on far too long in an isolation partly unwilling, but also partly chosen, making a merit of our fault, expecting to inherit a rich, poetic, sympathetic life without drawing all the best of the past into our present experience. But we have not been, therefore, wise. Our services of devotion need much more loving attention, more richness and harmony, more reverence and beauty. Our church members need to appreciate the significance of their membership; our young people need to be welcomed into the church with a special but simple service; our houses of worship, our homes of prayer, need every thought and skill and care to make them helpful to the worshipper. For we are faced by this position. The man who can no longer rest on the asserted authority of either the Church or the past, is therefore left alone with the doctrine of direct and present and sufficient intuition. But is it not a pathetic mistake to imagine that the modern man can thus stand alone with this high and solitary doctrine, and entirely dispense with all the aids of devotion and the fellowships of religion. He knows himself that he cannot do it. He needs the help of public worship.

*Worship, in fact, must submit to the final test of life.*

Does it work, does it help, does it elevate thought and conduct, does it



make the saint? If we attempt to do without it are we better or worse as result? In his famous Cambridge address, Emerson used these desponding words: "What hold public worship had on men is gone, or going. It has lost its grasp on the affections of the good and the fear of the bad." And he added pathetically: "What greater calamity? then all things go to decay." That was seventy years since, and worship has not yet lost its grasp though it has lessened its adherents and changed its emphasis. But we re-echo Emerson's cry, "What greater calamity?" if it should go to decay.

It rests with our Free Trust Churches, along with others, and with their congregations more than their ministers, to uplift and exalt public worship into the divinest power in life. There are many who fall away. Let them see that the assembly of the church each Sunday is no hollow and conventional routine, but the genuine joint expression of desire and conviction, the recognition of eternal life in the midst of time, a real and living communion of God and man. Let the stranger who may wander in find a home of true devotion, a place of peaceful reverence and joyful praise, a service alive with divine things. Then will he go hence with an added sense of God's presence. Then shall be fulfilled by all the saying of Paul the Apostle: "If, therefore, the whole Church be assembled together, and there come in an unbeliever, or a gainsayer, he will be convinced of all, and the secrets of his heart made manifest, so that falling down on his face he will worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed."

#### OUR CONGREGATIONS—THEIR MEMBERSHIP AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION.

By THE REV. JAMES HARWOOD, B.A.

THE fundamental purpose of a Christian Church, to which everything else is subordinate, viz., Worship, has already been dealt with in Mr. Freeston's paper. But though that is the first, it is not the only matter to be considered. Worshipping souls are essential for the Church just as blocks of stone, or their equivalent, are essential for a building. But having got the blocks of stone, you do not expect that any mere haphazard arrangement of them will produce a building. You know that there are certain laws of construction to be observed; that you must dispose your materials according to the strain they have to bear, and especially you remember that if the building is to endure the shocks of time and circumstance, you must join stone to stone with suitable cement, and not trust merely to the weight of each separate block to secure the stability of the whole.

My parable explains itself. In building the temple—whether it be material or spiritual—method and care are necessary; some things are essential, others fatal to success. I believe that one of our great causes of weakness has been the neglect to choose the right method, or indeed any method at all. And by the right method, I do not mean to imply that there is any one system to be rigidly

applied in all cases. The right method is the one which is best suited to the circumstances of the particular place; it will not be the same, e.g., in a domestic mission congregation as it is in a congregation of more varied character. I do not put one of these higher than the other; I only mean that as the conditions vary, a wise method of treatment will vary with them.

My first plea, therefore, is that we should trust less to chance in the organisation of the individual congregation. My second, that more care should be taken in adapting means to ends.

The Conference committee recently invited replies to certain specific questions from all the congregations on its roll. One would have been glad that in the cause of our religious fellowship this endeavour to make the experience of each available for the information of all should have been supported by willingness on the part of every one of our churches to contribute to the common treasury of knowledge. Of 277 English congregations 72½ per cent. replied (of whom 3 declined to give information); of 31 Welsh congregations 71 per cent. replied; of 6 Scotch congregations 66½ per cent. replied; of 37 Irish congregations 40½ per cent. replied.

It is curious that the Irish percentage should be so small. The people of that country do not object on principle to furnish information, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer recently discovered in connection with old age pensions. I regret this omission the more because it would have been interesting to compare the working of the Presbyterian system with that of the Congregational system, with which we are familiar on this side of the channel. From the other parts of our constituency the larger congregations, with scarcely an exception, have replied. With regard to those who have not answered, silence is sometimes significant; and it may be conjectured that many of them might say with Canning's needy knife-grinder, "Story, God bless you, I have none to tell, sir." I desire to take this opportunity of acknowledging the courtesy and care which have been generally shown by those who responded to the invitation.

Out of 242 congregations 21 definitely say that no register of members is kept, while 8 others do not answer the question. Surely it would be in every way an advantage, and might avoid difficulties when important questions arise, if every congregation, however small, were to have a roll, and to keep it posted up to date.

In most cases there is an age qualification for membership, ranging from so low as 14 up to 21. Eighteen seems to be a favourite age. Personally, I think 21 is the best time to enter on the full privileges and responsibilities of membership.

With a few exceptions there is a financial qualification for members, varying from 6d. to 21s. per annum, and with many ingenious devices of weekly or quarterly payments and reduced rates to meet the case of younger or poorer members. We have heard much denunciation of any kind of cash nexus in church membership that to me seems wide of the mark. No one, of course, suggests, on the one hand, that the mere payment of a subscription or pew rent fulfils all the obligations of a member of a Christian Church, or, on

the other, that persons who cannot afford anything at all should not be made heartily welcome to the hospitality and ministrations of the Church. In all relations of life there are undefined obligations, which each of us has to interpret for himself. The question, therefore, is not whether cash payment is the sole duty, but whether it can be fittingly made an essential duty of membership. As a general rule, in the conditions under which we live, I think it can. That it is all but universal shows there must be some practical necessity, and wherever there is a practical necessity we generally find some higher purpose is served by accepting it. As long, at least, as we depend on a professional paid ministry there is obvious need of a steady income upon which reliance can be placed. Looking at the matter from the point of view of the self-respect, independence and efficiency of the ministry, I am convinced these are more likely to be secured when the congregation as a whole form one of the contracting parties on a definite business basis than when the minister has to depend on the fluctuations of generous impulses. If ministerial incomes, on the average, are much smaller than those earned by men of similar status in other callings, that is all the more reason why, as far as possible, they should be made comparatively secure. The heart of many a minister, and still more of many a minister's wife, is eaten away, not so much by limited means as by precarious means. But, further, I maintain not only that the present general arrangement is needful for the ministry, but that it is good for the congregation itself to recognise as part of its duty suitable provision for maintaining the Church. It is to be wished, indeed, that the mere financial element in a church's life figured less prominently than it often does. A church, like an individual or a family, does well from time to time to take stock of its resources, to arrange its expenditure accordingly, and then to think no more about it, but laying aside the Martha worries, to surrender itself to Mary's better part. So far as an outsider can judge, the Wesleyans show us a good example in this respect. They certainly do not lose sight of practical needs; yet these are not allowed to hinder them from giving chief heed to what is of chief concern. The best arrangement would seem to be, to fix a minimum payment, which must necessarily vary in different places, but which should be something more than nominal, and then in addition to have a voluntary subscription list in which the better able and more generous members may assess themselves. In order that not a single person may be shut out by inability to contribute, I would commend the plan adopted in one church in which the committee has the power, on the nomination of the minister, to place persons on the roll who are unable to subscribe.

The remaining condition of membership about which a question was asked, referred to character. In the majority of cases persons desiring to join a congregation are admitted as a matter of course, without any questions being asked. But I confess I am surprised to find that there are 88 congregations—more among the newer than the older ones—where some sort of inquiry into character is made, or a right



of veto is claimed by officers, minister, committee, or the congregation as a whole. Everything depends, of course, upon the conception which is held of the church. If it is regarded as a body of saints, more or less "finished," then too great care cannot be taken to keep it free from contamination. The trouble is, that on that principle, it is apt to be more concerned about its reputation than its mission to the world, and to come under the scathing satire of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. If, on the other hand, the church is regarded as a society of those who do not profess to have attained, but desire to look up and to lift up, and are conscious of needs they cannot satisfy of themselves, then so far from bidding people wait until their credentials have been examined, the spirit of the Master will, I think, prompt them to offer a hearty welcome to all who wish to enter. In our churches of all others, this would seem to be the right attitude, for one advantage of being in a small minority is that no one is tempted to join from unworthy motives. I speak now only of ordinary membership. When it is a question of appointing officials, common prudence suggests that those who are to be responsible for the work of the church, and to represent it before men, should, by character and reputation, be worthy of the position they hold.

The replies to the question as to any special encouragement to young people and Sunday scholars do not furnish much variety. Some say "none" simply; others "we admit junior members or associates at a reduced subscription," or, "we call the attention of the school to the matter"; some few—I wish there were more—have a special service of welcome and dedication for young people who have been conducted by the minister through a course of special instruction. All this is excellent, but after all the decisive factor in this matter is to be found, as a rule, in the home—in the silent influence of the father's and the mother's example, in the habitual tone adopted towards sacred things, in a right word fitly spoken in due season. That lies beyond the scope of my paper, but on it depends to a very large extent our whole religious future.

The question "have members any defined duties and privileges?" seems to have been more difficult to answer than to ask. Most replies may be summed up thus, "it is their privilege to pay and their duty to vote or to be voted for." Many put it the other way about, but the result is the same. In one place members are entitled to the privilege of free burial! But what has surprised me more than anything else in this inquiry is that there is actually one of our churches in which no woman is allowed a vote! And this, be it observed, not in consequence of what has been taking place during the last year or two, but in obedience to an ancient trust deed. You will hardly wonder that the secretary of this congregation, who regrets the disability, bewails their moribund condition. Cannot some of our legal friends suggest a means whereby the deadening influence of the dead hand may be removed?

There is great variety in the length of time that persons must have been on the

roll before exercising the privilege of voting. In many cases they can do so at once; in a few only after two years. I would suggest that twelve months is a reasonable period, except in the case of those who have been transferred from another congregation on our roll, when they might well be admitted at once. This is one of the natural opportunities for modifying the separateness of Congregationalism by the recognition of a larger religious fellowship.

That we are moving in this direction is shown by the large number of cases in which it is reported that systematic endeavours are made to introduce members removing from one place to another. Many are the lapses from our ranks that have been due to lack of shepherding during such changes. Now that the exigencies of modern life make removal increasingly frequent, I would respectfully commend to all who are interested in our churches greater attention to this matter.

Almost all congregations report that they have committees appointed at the annual meeting—a very common and sensible arrangement being that one-third retires annually and is ineligible for re-election. In this way fresh blood is constantly being introduced and at the same time a certain continuity is secured.

The question which has excited the greatest animation is No. 9: "Is the minister an *ex-officio* member of the committee?" Large capitals, notes of exclamation, underscoring frequently indicate the importance attached to the matter. What a pathetic picture, or rather series of pictures, is suggested by this reply. "Our experience with four ministers is that it is best not to have the minister on the committee." On the other hand, another writes that the minister is now on the committee. "The arrangement works well and avoids friction." Sometimes without being a member of the committee, the minister attends by invitation or stays away by request (presumably when an increase of salary is under consideration!) or is supplied with the agenda, and comes or stays away as he chooses. In several cases the minister is chairman, occasionally secretary, which is never a desirable arrangement. Amid all this contrariety of opinion and practice, who shall say which is best, or whether indeed there is a best, to be recommended under all circumstances? And yet, I will not conceal my own conviction, which I know will be strongly opposed. I was never on my congregational committee, and never wished to be, yet I never had the least difficulty in having my wishes and suggestions fairly considered, and as a rule carried out. Nor is there any difficulty when the relations are harmonious; while, if they are not harmonious, I fear they will not be improved by the presence of the minister on the committee. The one case in which I should think it desirable to make an exception is, where the minister is the best or only man of business knowledge—and there evidently are such cases.

I need not detain you with questions 10 and 11, except to say that now there hardly appears to be a sign of what at one time was a not uncommon grievance—that the congregation was overborne by the trustees. In almost all cases the actual congregation appears to be master of its fate, and where,

as a matter of legal requirement, the trustees, *e.g.*, appoint a minister, they seem to confirm the choice of the congregation.

The selection of minister is the most important business of all. It is to be wished that more care was taken than is sometimes taken, and that resort was never had to undesirable modes of procedure, such as advertising. Partly through the National Conference and as a result of Dr. Martineau's proposals at Leeds, congregations have now at their service many facilities for obtaining assistance. The wise method surely is, to take every possible care *before* election, and afterwards, never to look behind, but to give the fullest confidence and support to the man of their choice.

In passing, let me remind you that advisory committees are available not only in matters connected with the ministry. According to the New Testament, personal difficulties arose in the churches in the earliest times; they are sometimes found still. One secretary writes, "the committee claimed the right of management of all the affairs of the church as against the wishes of the congregation that elected them." It should be widely known that now, through the advisory committees, provision is made for the intervention, *where desired and sought*, of a sympathetic and impartial body, whose only interest is that which we all have, or ought to have, at heart—the true welfare of our churches.

These matters I believe are important, but I must say in conclusion, that men are even more important than measures. Our churches are commonly credited with containing men of more than average ability and character, and it is they whom we must enlist in larger numbers in the service of those churches. We have a message to proclaim which is the best we know. To our forefathers we are indebted for the freedom of which we will not lightly speak. With such wisdom as we can attain to in our minds, with faith and hope and love in our hearts, let us with renewed consecration go forward in the service to which we are called.

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We commend Olive Schreiner's letter on the South African problem to the careful attention of politicians whether of the philosophical kind, or of the kind that with a minimum of philosophy considers itself practical. Published under the title *Closer Union*, it deals primarily with the question of *unifying or federating* the different South African states; and the verdict is given for federation. Incidental, but most significant, is the discussion of the relation of the white to the coloured population. Mrs. Schreiner writes clearly and trenchantly, and we can but hope that her earnest pleas for a really patriotic and enlightened policy in this matter may find a willing hearing among her countrymen. The little book is a piece of vivid literature, and embodies many sane counsels along with a gifted woman's noble visions of a possible future for the land she loves. (Fifield. Price 1s. net.)

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PRAYER fails because to the soul there was no real presence of God while we were praying.—J. H. Thom.



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE GUILDS' UNION.

### ANNUAL MEETING.

THE annual meeting was held at Bolton on Monday, in connection with the meetings of the National Conference, the President, the Rev. John Ellis, in the chair. The meeting followed immediately after a Council meeting held earlier in the afternoon, in the Men's Class Room, of the Bank-street Schools. The members of the Council present, in addition to the President, were the Rev. C. M. Wright (secretary), Mr. H. P. Greg (treasurer), and the Revs. J. C. Ballantyne, A. H. Dolphin, F. K. Freeston, W. H. Lambelle, and J. J. Wright; and there were about sixteen other members and friends of the Union present.

The minutes of the last annual meeting, held at Essex Hall on Whit-Monday, were read and confirmed, and the secretary then read the Council's annual report, as follows:—

### REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

The Council heartily welcomes into the fellowship Guilds recently formed at Sale, Horsham, Mansfield, and Stalybridge. The addition of these brings the Guilds in the Union upto 31, with a membership of about 1,500.

It has also been intimated that kindred Societies have been organised at Aberdeen, Blackley, Bristol (Clifton), Blackfriars Carlisle, Elland, Hackney, Hinckley, Leigh, Loughborough, Shrewsbury, and Stockton, and we have heard of other organisations, too modest to declare themselves, inspired with similar purpose, and doing similar work, in other places. It would be good for them, and for the movement generally, if they could be induced to join the Union, and it would bring nearer the time when local rallies could be organised, thus heartening our young workers by the sense of comradeship in high aims.

Of the affiliated Guilds, some of the smaller are at times disposed to get discouraged because of their difficulties, and one or two are suffering at present from lack of leadership, owing to changes of pastorate. The Council would be glad to help, individually or collectively, were a way suggested. Perhaps the loan of guild papers, or a visit from other Guild leaders, would be of advantage.

For the most part, however, the reports are cheerful and optimistic. They tell of happy fellowship in work and worship, of high themes—religious, literary and social—considered; of good service rendered for the church, the Sunday school, and the community. The older Guilds well maintain their strength and enthusiasm, and one or two of those newly formed are fertile in new methods.

The reports show that the Guild Manual of services and prayers is generally helpful; that Guild members are to be relied upon for help in the church and Sunday school, and for religious propaganda. Some items of a special character are especially interesting: *c.g.*, we are told that in many cases Guild members provide flowers for the Communion table, and afterwards carry them, with a sympathetic message to the sick; that one Guild contributes 2s. weekly

towards the support of a crippled invalid; that another gives annually a Robin breakfast to 1,100 poor children at Christmas; that members of another Guild do the gardening work in connection with the Church, and raise about £15 for the church funds; that another Guild last year was responsible for the cost of a fortnight's holiday for 23 children, and two Guilds gave entertainments to the crippled and the blind. It will be conceded that all this is in harmony with the Guild motto—"For God and the Good Life." It means wholesome culture. The development of this spirit would surely be good for our churches generally.

The election, at the last annual meeting, of the Rev. John Ellis to the Presidency, necessitated the appointment of a secretary in his place. The Council were fortunate in securing the services of the Rev. C. M. Wright, M.A., for that office, and they look forward hopefully to the extension of the movement through his energetic labours.

The following were co-opted members of the Council—Revs. J. J. Wright, Alfred Hall, Charles Peach, and Mr. Alfred Thompson.

The President sent out a printed letter (A Call to Service) to all the affiliated Guilds, early in the autumn, which was warmly appreciated in many places, and did good.

A further letter, by the sanction of the Council, was issued to the Guilds, and to ministers of churches where it was thought guilds might with advantage be promoted, together with the annual reports, leaflets, and syllabus of subjects for guild papers and study, with results fairly encouraging.

The suggested topics do not, judging by the reports, appear to have been extensively used this year.

The Council are glad to know that several classes have been formed for the study of religious, social, and literary subjects.

This year, in place of the elaborate prize essay scheme, three prizes were offered for the best Guild papers on the subject—"How best to apply the Parable of the Good Samaritan to Modern Life." Six papers were sent in from five Guilds, and the prizes are awarded as follows:—

First prize (value £1), Miss Margaret Stanford Butler, Guild of Kindness, Birmingham.

Second prize (value 10s.), Mr. Robert Sidney Ellis (age 15), Guild of Service, Norwich.

Third prize (value 5s.), Mr. Francis Noel Crabtree, Uppertorpe Guild, Sheffield.

The examiner, Rev. J. J. Wright, reports—"Of the six papers submitted, taken in the light of all the conditions, and more especially in view of the object stated, viz., 'to be read at the devotional meetings of the Guild,' 'Compassion's' (Miss Butler's) is remarkably good, and might well be read at every Guild in the Union. Those of 'Fortibus' (Mr. R. S. Ellis), and 'Francis,' (Mr. F. N. Crabtree), though written by much younger essayists, have also not only caught the real spirit of the parable, but are very successful in the number and practicality of the illustration they use, by which in modern life the spirit of the parable may

be applied. Of the three other papers, while 'Live and Let Live,' and 'Do your Just Part,' are the more strong, yet 'Who is My Neighbour?' much better exemplifies the spirit of the Parable."

(The essays are sent to the examiner bearing a motto, and not the name of the writer.)

The Council conclude the report with gratitude for the good work done, and the devout hope that this labour for and with the young people of our churches, may yet bear fruit more abundantly.

The PRESIDENT, in moving the adoption of the report, said that while the movement did not grow as they would like, the report was yet the record of a spirit and a life gratifying to know of. Where the Guilds had taken hold, they formed about the strongest and most hopeful part of the life of the church. There had been more response during the past year, and they hoped for a still better harvest.

The Rev. A. H. DOLPHIN, seconding, dwelt on the encouraging elements in the report; and asked why other kindred societies did not join the union. It would not only strengthen their own work but be a help to the rest.

Mr. H. P. GREG, as treasurer, presented the accounts. The year began with an adverse balance of £15 6s. 10d., increased by the end of the year to £20 8s. 8d., on a total of £33 8s. 5d. Affiliation fees from 27 Guilds amounted to £6 15s., subscriptions to only £2 2s., and donations £1. The sale of manuals brought in £3 2s. 9d. They had still a large stock of manuals to be sold, so that the cost (£25) would be gradually returned to them, but he found it almost impossible, the treasurer said, to get subscriptions for the small amount required for the work. They need not be disappointed at the record; no association that he knew of did so much good work with so small an income. But when he asked for subscriptions, people did not like to be troubled with such small amounts. He thought they might fairly ask for a grant from the National Conference of £10 annually to put their finances on a proper footing.

The accounts were adopted on the motion of the President, seconded by the Rev. W. H. Lambelle, and it was then agreed on the treasurer's motion to apply to the National Conference for an annual grant of £10 in support of the work.

Mr. LEONARD SHORT moved, and the Rev. R. K. Davis, seconded, the election of the officers and Council; Rev. John Ellis, president, Rev. C. M. Wright, secretary, Mr. H. P. Greg, treasurer; and as members of the Council: Rev. J. C. Ballantyne, Mr. W. Cheshire, Revs. Gordon Cooper, A. H. Dolphin, Alfred Hall, W. H. Lambelle, Dr. Thackray and J. J. Wright. Four other members are to be co-opted at the first meeting of the council.

The Rev. F. K. FREESTON then moved a resolution commending the Guild Movement to the churches. They must not judge of the importance or the success of their work, he said, from the smallness of that meeting. They missed the presence of their veteran and former president, the Rev. Joseph Wood, whom they looked to naturally to move that resolution, but he, no doubt, was saving himself for his arduous



duties as President of the National Conference during the week. Mr. Freeston referred to the splendid meeting of the young people of our London churches recently held in Essex Hall, and said they must see if they could not succeed better in making a similar appeal. They wanted the young people, they wanted their hearts, their enthusiasm, their co-operation, on religious grounds, in the work of the churches.

The Rev. J. C. BALLANTYNE seconded, as a newcomer into the Union, and dwelt especially on the value of the Guild as fostering the true spirit in those already engaged in various branches of their work, who needed to be drawn together with a deeper sense of unity.

The resolution was unanimously adopted, and with a resolution of thanks to the President and all other workers for the Union, the meeting terminated. Tea was afterwards served in the Upper school room.

#### YOUNG PEOPLE'S RALLY.

In the evening there was a splendid gathering in Bank-street Chapel, chiefly of young people and workers in association with them. The President of the Guild's Union, the Rev. John Ellis, presided, and the meeting opened with a hymn "Lord we thank thee for the pleasure," and prayer offered by the Rev. Joseph Wood.

The President, in an opening address, said it was delightful that they had secured such a gathering of young people. Other denominations had seen the wisdom of such appeals to the young, and they had begun at the National Conference meeting in Liverpool six years ago, and again at the last meeting of the Conference at Oxford, where they had a fine meeting. In the Guilds' Union, a union of societies of young people, they were avowedly united to foster the religious life, and to inspire personal service. The word *Mutual* expressed the essential principle of the Guild. It was a banding together for mutual help, mutual enjoyment, and mutual encouragement in good endeavour. They sought to cultivate the altruistic spirit, which makes for better and more enthusiastic workers in the church and in the community. "For God and the Good Life," was the Union motto. Their aim was to bring a spirit of greater earnestness into all their work.

Miss MINNIE TWIST, of Birmingham, then gave a delightful account of the work of the "Guild of Kindness," connected with the Old Meeting Church. They had 150 senior members, some very enthusiastic, who had joined because they wanted to help forward the higher things of life, and felt that they could best do it by being so banded together; others were not so enthusiastic, and had joined simply for the sake of the amusements they could get, or because they had friends in the Guild and thought "they might as well join too." What they wanted was that all members should live up to their motto, "For God and the Good Life." They had senior and junior members, and also associates, who were not able to take active part in the work, but subscribed 2s. 6d. as an expression of sympathy and interest. In the junior branch they had various classes for the boys and girls, clay modelling, wood carving, fret-work, the making

of scrap books, &c. They had 190 children on the roll, and an average attendance (from October to March) of 172. Each child paid 2d. for a card of membership, and in alternate weeks there was a lantern lecture. At the age of 13 or 14 the children went on with the Girls' Guild or the Boys' Life Brigade. The girls had also a branch of the White Ribbon Band. At 16 they joined the Senior Guild. Thus a great deal was done for the recreation of the young people, to encourage them in clean, healthy pleasures, to keep them from the streets. They made a monthly collection for the Sick Children's Holiday Fund, which was of great service. Speaking further of their ideal, Miss Twist said their dream was of a Guild that would take the children and keep them all their lives, making them all members of the church. They had to look to the young people to make the future of their congregations, and so weld the guild and church together that members passed on naturally from one to the other. They wanted to cultivate more and more of the spirit of brotherliness and service. They had no right to be content simply with helping their own little few, but must go out to others, according to the word, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Miss Twist concluded by urging more unity in the high ideals of life, and the formation of district unions of guilds, such as had already been formed in London, to strengthen one another, and secure a larger measure of enthusiasm and co-operation.

The Rev. N. ANDERTON spoke next, and said that he should address them all as "young souls," for however it might be with bodies, in soul they were all young, and he appealed to them to adopt for themselves what was said of Gladstone in Morley's Life: "You have so lived and wrought as to keep the soul alive in England." That was the ideal which had called them together. Young and old, they were banded together to keep the soul alive in England. It was part of their duty, to that end, to keep the body alive also. St. Francis had indeed spoken of the body as "Brother Donkey," but they were right in using Brother Donkey well, to have him in good going trim; thus they were right to encourage their young people in all healthy exercises and pleasures, dancing, cricket, tennis: and their churches would greatly benefit if they could have brought into them a stream of enthusiasm from the young people associated with them. Their task was far from easy. The social condition of the people was one of the gravest impediments to their churches, and he had great sympathy with those who felt that they could care for nothing else but the battle against the social evils of the time. But there was the greater need for their own work. Not till character was formed could they fit men into the right social state. Progress must be slow, because man is a child of God, and must be convinced inside as well as provided for outside. Thus they must go on with the work of keeping souls alive in England. They had to build up and serve the spiritual life of man, and he appealed to the young people to realise that there was something for them to do in the battle with evil and social wrong. There was necessity for them to be banded

together as fighting souls; and in the life of the church, in spiritual worship, they would find the right inspiration. In the church they were in touch with the living souls of the past as well as of the present, and the young people must learn to share in those riches. They must give up the liberty which was only licence, and come under that obedience which was the law of liberty. The faith of their church was a young people's faith, in touch with the times, not gloomy or sullen, nor laying up for them intellectual difficulties in the time to come. It was a cheerful, forward looking faith, not estranged from the social movements of the time, a church founded on the great faith of Fatherhood and Brotherhood. He appealed to them to rally for the great cause, and not leave it all to the elders. And he concluded by adapting for their use the football lines:—

Forty years on, growing older and older,  
Shorter in wind, as in memory long,  
Feeble of foot and rheumatic of shoulder,  
What will it help you that once you  
were strong.  
God give us bases to guard and beleaguer,  
Games to play out, whether earnest or  
fun,  
Fights for the fearless and goals for the  
eager,  
Twenty and thirty, and forty years on.  
Follow up, follow up, follow up, follow up,  
Till the field ring again;  
With the tramp of [young women] and men,  
Follow up!

This was followed by another hymn, "In Life's Earnest Morning," and then two more addresses.

Mr. LEONARD SHORT spoke of earnestness, quoting St. Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians, "Desire Earnestly the Greater Gifts." There was, he said, plenty of earnestness; but what are people earnest about? Largely about the lesser gifts, striving and competing for material wealth, and in popular pastimes. Temporal things are put before the spiritual gifts which are eternal. Be in earnest about the right things, was his exhortation; then you will know where you stand—on the side of the things which are eternal, on the side of true religion. Reconsecrate your lives to the service of religion, to the greater gifts of faith and hope and love.

#### NATIONAL CONFERENCE UNION FOR SOCIAL SERVICE.

THE annual meeting was held in the Men's Class Room of the Bank-street schools, on Tuesday afternoon in connection with the National Conference meetings at Bolton, the President, the Rev. P. H. WICKSTEED in the chair.

The Rev. R. P. FARLEY read the Committee's report, and Mr. RICHARD ROBINSON presented the accounts showing a balance in hand of £32 16s. 9d. on a total of £84 3s. 4d. On the motion of the Rev. J. C. Street, seconded by the Rev. V. D. Davis, the report was adopted. Mr. Street spoke with much feeling of his interest in the work, as one who had at once joined the Union on its formation, though he had been prevented from joining in the work. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to those who had taken it up.



Miss GITTINS proposed, and the Rev. J. M. LLOYD THOMAS seconded, an alteration of rules, of which notice had been given, by which the management of the Union is vested in the officers and a large council, to meet at least once a year, and to elect a small executive of not less than 5 nor more than 7, who, with the President, treasurer, and secretaries will be the committee, to meet not less than once a quarter, 4 to form a quorum.

The Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas was elected president, and a considerable number of vice-presidents were also chosen. Treasurer and secretaries were re-elected.

The following were among the resolutions passed:—

“That this Union has learned with very great regret that the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed is unable to comply with the universal desire that he should be nominated as president. They desire to express to him, and to put on record their warm gratitude for his interest in the movement from its inception, for the valuable services he has rendered as its president for three years, for the unfailing sympathy with which he has co-operated in every work which it has undertaken, and the stimulus and helpfulness of his guidance.

On the motion of the Rev. W. WHITAKER, it was agreed:—“That this meeting give instructions to the executive to arrange for a campaign in Lancashire and Yorkshire for the abolition of the ‘half-time’ system, and to devise all necessary means for helping the campaign, *e.g.*, by inviting lecturers to specialise on the subject, by asking individual churches to arrange conferences with churches of other denominations, and by issuing a leaflet or leaflets.”

On the motion of the Rev. F. H. VAUGHAN it was agreed that the Council should consider how far it is desirable “to get into relations with the Progressive League,” and to take such action as they may think fit. The report of the Union covering the past three years, to be presented to the National Conference, was read by Miss Gittins, as follows:—

#### THE REPORT.

THE Committee begs to lay before the Conference its report of the work done during the time which has elapsed since its formation at Oxford three years ago. The starting of such a novel undertaking in connection with our churches was of itself difficult, and it has been rendered much more so by the numerous changes which the Committee regrets to report have taken place in the Secretaryship. The Union owed much at the beginning to the keen interest in its aims and the earnest search for right methods of work of its first secretary Benjamin Kirkman Gray; and his sudden death in June, 1907, on the eve of the first Oxford Summer School, was a severe blow to the hopes of its founders. Mr. Gray was deeply impressed with the necessity for careful study of the problems of our present day civilisation; he had, himself, through his mission work, gained a painful experience of the evils incidental to the poverty existing in our large cities, and he believed that more intimate knowledge of the facts must arouse an active Christian sympathy, which would lead to practical effort for the removal of those evils. With this object

in view he inaugurated a series of leaflets dealing with various aspects of the poverty problem, and during his one year of office the following syllabuses of study were published:—(1) Introduction to the Study of Poverty; (2) Sweated Industries and Underpaid Labour; (3) The Feeble-minded, and how to deal with them. These were followed in the next year by (4) The Housing Problem; and (5) The Temperance Problem, and later still by a leaflet showing the possibilities of improvement of present conditions by the enforcement of the existing Acts relating to Public Health. A list of lectures on social topics was also prepared, and sent round to the churches, and during the first winter 26 of these lectures were delivered under the auspices of the Union. The death of Mr. Gray was a grievous hindrance to the development of this part of the work, as it was found impossible to make arrangements for continuing it to the same extent during the following winter. The Committee hopes, however, to be in a position to offer similar help to secretaries of congregations, guilds, reading circles, and other organisations during the next twelve months.

To Mr. Gray the Union was also indebted for the inception of the first Summer School in Oxford, in July, 1907. He organised the programme of lectures, which contained the names of the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, M.A., J. H. Wicksteed, B.A., Graham Wallas, Raymond Unwin, H. B. Lees Smith, Miss Clementina Black, Miss H. M. Johnson and Mr. Seeborn Rowntree. Further details were given in the Second Annual Report of the Union. It is enough to say here that the interest aroused by the lectures and discussions, the impressive religious services in the Chapel, the gracious reception accorded by Principal and Mrs. Carpenter, the friendly intercourse among the members, together with the constant presence of the president, the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, combined to render the week a memorable one to all who were privileged to take part in it. The local arrangements were undertaken and ably carried out by the Rev. J. C. Ballantyne, and at the close of the meetings he accepted the invitation of the Committee to become joint secretary of the Union, with Miss Gittins. Towards the end of the year, however, the pressure of his duties in connection with the Blackfriars Mission compelled him to resign, to the great regret of the Committee, who then appointed Mr. Arthur H. Biggs, but in a short time he too was obliged to give up the work on his removal to Birmingham, as curate to the Rev. Joseph Wood.

This was in the autumn of last year, and at its next meeting the Committee extended a hearty and unanimous invitation to the Rev. R. P. Farley, B.A., who consented to take up the duties of joint secretary. It is hoped shortly to develop the work in various directions. Already there are several centres for the study of social problems, and in one or two cases, notably at Nottingham, our churches have taken the lead in initiating measures for the public good.

A Conference of the Union was held in November, 1908, at the High Pavement, Nottingham, and opened with a service in the chapel when the Rev. Joseph Wood,

President of the Conference, preached the sermon. Papers were read in the afternoon by Rev. Bruce Wallace, and the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, that of the latter being afterwards published by the Union in pamphlet form, and in the evening a well attended public meeting was held in the Mechanics' Institute, with the Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas in the chair, and addresses were delivered by the Rev. J. Wood, Mr. Richard Robinson, the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, and the Rev. R. P. Farley.

An evening meeting of the Sunday School Summer Session, at Oxford, last July, was devoted to an explanation of the aims and objects of the Union, with the President in the chair, and the Social Service session at the present Triennial Conference on the Report of the Poor Law Commission has also been arranged by the Committee of the Union in consultation with the Conference Committee.

A second Summer School at Oxford is now being organised, and will be held during the second week in July, from Monday the 12th to Friday the 16th, and the Committee trusts it will prove worthy of the tradition established by its predecessor.

To the deep regret of the Committee the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed now feels obliged to retire from the office of President, and at the annual meeting held this afternoon the Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas was elected to fill his place.

The Rev. S. A. ELIOT, D.D., President of the American Unitarian Association, responding to a very cordial welcome offered to him by the President, delivered the affectionate salutations of the American Young People's Religious Union, and congratulated the young people before him, as he had already done in London, on the high adventure in which they were engaged. What fun it is, he said, once more to enlist in a cause that requires all the chivalry that is in us, the cause of pure religion and public righteousness! How happy are we, that we can be all the time pursuing ideals that must ever journey before us. Our good obtained ought only to be tidings of something better. Is there not, he asked, a lot of good conviction and truth that never gets adequately expressed—good purpose in the heart not sufficiently uttered? What is going to make the things that we know tell or the things that we do? What is going to turn our desires and our idealism into achievement? It depends on what we are. Ever, what a man is stands between what he knows and what he does. We must not only have that in us which will do people good if they will take it from us, we have to be such people that they can take it from us. In every age there have been wise men, but rather hard and unsympathetic, like snow banks on the hill side, and conscious of locked up fertility we wonder why their wisdom does not save the world. The snow must melt on the hill side and flow down in streams to enrich the valley below. It is the faith that combines truth and affection that has immortal power. That is the force that makes men into mediators. To furnish truth for men and men for truth seems the noblest office of manhood. How are we to win something of that power? By



securing the impulse, the dynamic of a commanding motive, by bringing into life single-mindedness, directness of aim, persistence in right endeavour. Many make the mistake about the nature of progress in the things of the spirit, likening it to that of material affairs, which is matter of acquisition and accumulation. Religious progress is a process not of accumulation but of penetration. Religious vitality does not depend on the number of things you believe, but on how you believe in any; that is most onward which is most inward. The great forward steps are not concerned with details of belief or of organisation, but with the practice of the primary principles, the two great commandments. The commanding motive comes when it is realised that this adventure, this battle for truth and freedom and righteousness, in which you are eager to engage, is at bottom not your battle, but God's battle, and you are the agents of the Divine Good Will. That is the solemn responsibility that rests on each and all. God and man are partners in this world's work. The one creates, the other reveals; the one originates, the other manifests. God has to work through His children, and and the responsibility for human progress rests right on human shoulders. That ought to bring a new self-respect to everyone. No drudgery is too monotonous, no details are too petty, if we have that commanding imperative conviction. Take that confidence, and work it out in everyday life. Remember it is the fight of God. Every step of human progress is God's taking possession of his own. The poor are God's poor, the slaves are God's free men. Every outgrown superstition is a barrier against God's light removed. We can still keep all the other interests and motives and desires that help us, but greater than all is that sense of confederacy with the purposes of the Most High. Take it into your everyday experience. When some new conviction of truth flashes into your mind, and you determine to do in this world the work for which you are fitted, know it is the voice of the living God claiming your allegiance. Or when you drift into the snares of the trivial life, and a new call comes to moral earnestness, know it as the call of the living God, the universal mind calling to the individual, the father claiming his child. With all the fulness of God at our side, how can we be so empty? With the heart of God for refuge, why are we so timid? Because we have not put ourselves into that right relationship with the Infinite Power that works in the universe. We have gone to God, if we have gone at all, seeking what we can get. Let us turn that all about, and go seeking what we can give, and do and be. Let an illustration make this plain. Two men love their country. One loves her for what she can give him—protection and help in his personal designs. The other loves her for herself, as the embodiment of ideals that seem to him desirable. One uses his country, the other asks his country to use him. Or two men seek the truth: One as a scholar, perhaps for the rewards that scholarship can bring; the other loves the truth for herself, and gives his life for the advance of the thought of the world. Just such might be the relationship of our souls with the power that works

in the universe. Some souls come asking help, protection, in their own selfish plans. Another comes, bringing to the religious life what he can give. He asks not that God may help him to do his own will, but "Lord, show me Thy will, that I may make it mine." Such a soul has entered into the secret of enduring power, efficiency, and serviceableness. God grant unto you all that efficiency of high resolve that somehow through us and those we may inspire, men may have life and have it more abundantly.

On the motion of the President it was agreed to send the most cordial greetings to the American Young People's Union, and Dr. Eliot said he should be delighted to carry the greetings to the meeting of the Union, which would be held in May.

The Rev. C. M. Wright expressed great gratification at the success of that meeting, and proposed the heartiest thanks to the speakers, after which the closing hymn, "Come labour on," was sung, and the Rev. F. K. Freeston pronounced the Benediction.

#### MINISTERS' PENSION AND INSURANCE FUND.

THE triennial meeting of the donors, subscribers and members of this fund was held on Tuesday afternoon, April 20, at Bank-street Schools, Bolton, in connection with the meetings of the National Conference, the President, Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter in the chair.

The annual reports and accounts for the past three years were presented, and accepted, on the motion of the President, seconded by Mr. Thomas Harwood. The following summary report for the triennial period was adopted for presentation to the National Conference.

#### THE REPORT.

During the three years since the last meeting of the National Conference, the number of policies running has risen from 85 to 97, of which 41 are for pension only, 3 for insurance only, and 53 for both pension and insurance. Several policies have been reassigned to ministers who for one reason or another have ceased to fulfil the conditions required by the Fund, but in no case have the managers thought it right to ask for the return of any portion of the payments made by them.

The Managers regret to report that three ministers insured under the regular tables have died during the period under review, the Revs. Richard C. Moore, Frank W. Stanley, and Frederick Thomas. Mr. Moore had paid four premiums, and the amount paid to his representatives was £306 1s. 4d. Mr. Stanley had insured for a pension only, and had paid five premiums under Table A, so that nothing was returnable. Mr. Thomas had also paid five premiums, and his representatives received £259 15s.

Two further appropriations have been made for the benefit of aged ministers in supplement of funds privately raised to enable them to retire. One of these, the Rev. F. Teasdale Reed, died shortly after the grant was made, but his widow has received the amount voted for the first year. There are now two annuitants upon the books, but contingent promises have been made to others.

A legacy of £100 has been received from the late Mr. Hodgson Pratt, and the capital now stands at £25,241 8s. 5d.

The Managers view with some concern the steady fall in the annual subscriptions, which during the three years' period have dropped from £298 to £237. To ensure thorough soundness for the Fund it was calculated at the outset that a subscription list of £300 per annum was required, as the calls are bound to become heavier each year for some time to come. It is much to be hoped that fresh individual and congregational subscriptions will flow in to replace the losses by death and other causes. The recent death of Mr. Holbrook Gaskell will still further reduce the subscription list by £20 per annum.

The Managers have already felt the value of Mr. Philip Holt's splendid donation, as it has enabled them to exercise a freer hand than was possible under the strict conditions attaching to the original corpus of the Fund, and in two instances they have been able to give an annual contribution towards particular insurances.

They would point out, however, that they are still powerless to make any grant to a minister, who through age or infirmity has been obliged to retire from active service before making application; and it would be a relief to their minds and a strength to the Fund if some generous donor would provide a sum of, say, £500, which could be utilised for this purpose.

The Managers deeply regret that Mr. David Martineau has intimated that through advancing years and increasing infirmity he must finally withdraw from the Board. They have expressed to him their deep sense of indebtedness for the valuable services which he rendered in establishing the sound financial basis of the Fund, as well as for his continuous guidance and practical wisdom in its management; but they feel that this obligation should be publicly recorded, so that all who are interested in its administration may give honour where it is due.

On behalf of the Managers,  
C. J. STREET, Hon. Sec.,  
125, Rustlings-road, Sheffield,  
April 20, 1909.

The following were appointed managers for the next nine years (a third of the whole body of managers):—Mr. C. Sydney Jones, Mr. Henry Lupton, Mr. Harold Wade, and Mr. John Lawson.

As auditors Mr. R. M. Montgomery and Mr. C. Herbert Smith were appointed.

On the motion of the President, seconded by Mr. F. Monks, the following resolution was adopted:—

"That this meeting of donors, subscribers, and members deeply regrets that Mr. David Martineau finds it needful to retire from the administration of the Ministers' Pension and Insurance Fund, which has owed so much to his wise guidance. Mr. Martineau took a leading share in the investigations which followed Mr. Conway's paper at the Sheffield Conference in 1897, and was the principal author of the scheme on which the Fund was founded. Since its establishment his intimate knowledge of its business and method has been of the utmost advantage to the Board of Managers; and his untiring interest in its



administration will be long cherished in grateful remembrance both by his colleagues in the work and by the increasing number of ministers who benefit by the Fund."

In connection with the financial position of the Fund, Mr. Monks urged that a further capital sum of £10,000 should be raised to secure the stability of the Fund, and it was also pointed out that the annual subscriptions, having fallen to little more than £200, ought to be once more raised to a total of £300.

A resolution of thanks to the Bolton friends for their hospitality brought the meeting to a close.

### IN THE CROW'S NEST.

If you want to taste the moon-rise, you must not look at the moon. It is doubtless an incomparable jewel, and we cannot wonder that old-fashioned weeklies with Poet's Corners keep in type, from Sexagesima till Pentecost:

ODE TO THE MOON.

O Moon!

Still, be advised, and look rather at the mountains. Against their blackness you begin to feel, rather than see, a faint, misty gleam, there and there, and yet without boundaries. Slowly it takes on the substance of a ghost, and soon a company of gigantic ghosts stands beneath the stars, expectant of some unearthly portent. They grow ever whiter and whiter, and take shape; the huge shadows hollow out between them; they reach long arms to one another, as if afraid, and are strengthened by the silent contact. Then, of a sudden, a beam of real light strikes the ridge, and it is a ridge, and underneath it are snowy rocks and dark gorges. The mountain chain stands real, but still dim, waiting to be glorified.

When the moon is high, how wonderfully unlike the Piz Turettas of sunlight is the bulk that has taken its place—so much softer, and yet so much more mysteriously awful. The more broken heights to the south also show white and black, but in greater masses. Westward the whole face of Piz Daint is white, but the snows of Piz Minchun and Piz Lat, underneath the moon, are of dense, forbidding black.

I hope to meet the moon in Cambridge, where the Backs of the Colleges form an object made for her magic; but how shall I bid farewell to these mountains? English trees and English gardens can outflaunt us easily, with their courtly splendours, with their bewitching variety of form, but what shall I do without my pine forest? And is there anything to recompense me for those Alpine anemones, those vernal gentians, which this year I shall not see? It is a grand thing to have the world's library at your elbow, to meet the magnates of knowledge in the streets, to converse with academic culture; but when a man has gone three furlongs from his cottage into inviolate solitude, has lain on pine needles amid alpenrosen and dined on wild strawberries, will even Cambridge content him? The rattle of wheels instead of the song of the torrents, the house across the way instead of these arves, these summits—what perverse whimsy led me to make such an exchange? Oh yes, I know. You say true. 'Tis so

indeed. But you have not been a Pfarrer for two years in the Münstertal.

At our communion to-day in the two valley parishes I admitted my confirmands, and preached my farewell sermon. When we leave a circle of friends, we wish to be sped with tears; but it makes a man very humble. There is one thing about this parting which gives me the feeling of a deserter. The people are saving to each other, "We shall never have a Romanish Pfarrer again." There are but few home-bred ministers, and the German-speaking divines, it seems, will not take the trouble to learn this language, and cannot pronounce it if they would. So the old folk, and the children, and many another, will have no preaching that they can understand. Well, it is settled. To-morrow I go to Lü, and preach for the last time, so far as expectation reveals, in the Münstertal.

What have I learned here? More than I ever learned at Oxford. For one thing, what a man is, and what a woman is, and a child. The dress of these people, their speech, their politics, their habits, the externals and accessories of their life, are utterly different from yours. But they themselves are what you are. That is something; it carries a good deal more with it, such as the folly of national prejudices, the criminal insanity of war. For another thing, the real power of our faith, its majesty, its tenderness. In England it passes for a rather select and frigid form of thinking, distinguished, indeed, by a certain ethical elevation, but no saving gospel for the multitude. Here it takes the little children in its arms, and blesses them, sends out youth into the struggle of life with high inspiration and firm support, keeps men true and women kind, bridges the grave with hope, lights and warms the house that has lost a presence. Two other lessons I might have learned, had I needed them. The first, that a free church is all the freer for being organised, since freedom consists in the exercise of faculty, and whatsoever confers power confers freedom. The second, that church organisation neither requires nor engenders dogmatic definitions of faith. I hear there are some in England who say, "You are at large, and you are weak; obviously cause and effect. To make you strong we must put you in prison." And others who say, "If free men unite, they become slaves." The history of the Swiss Landeskirche confutes them both.

E. W. LUMMIS.

*Fuldera, Easter Sunday,*

### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY.\*

To those who are old enough to remember the Sunday School of forty years ago, with its purely secular morning exercises and its specifically religious afternoons, the perusal of this new venture of the Sunday School Association will serve admirably to mark the effect of the Education Act of 1870 and its successors upon this branch of religious effort. It is no novelty to read in the Editor's prefatory remarks that "new methods are necessary"—almost every conference

\* *The Sunday School Quarterly*. Edited by Rev. J. Arthur Pearson. (The Sunday School Association, 3d.)

of teachers tells us that—but it is distinctly encouraging to be told also that "the new spirit is ready to put to the test the plans and recommendations that are forthcoming from whatever source." If Mr. Pearson can but preserve that same spirit of optimism throughout, his editorship should produce a magazine of priceless value to all concerned.

What strikes one as especially noteworthy about this first number is the great variety and very high standard of excellence it displays. Every branch of Sunday school work is dealt with by men and women who have earned the right to speak. Thus we have three well-known superintendents telling us what they expect of teachers, and it is almost comforting to find that most of the ancient difficulties are still alive among us, and alive in all parts of the country. Then we have well-known and respected teachers telling us of their successes with young men, with young women, and with infants, and while all three of these articles are excellent, and worthy of the most careful attention, that in which Edith J. Hall tells of her Infant Class Teaching on the Archibald method at Unity Chapel, Islington, is probably the one which will prove most suggestive. And a word of praise must be added for the beautifully sympathetic manner in which the Rev. W. L. Schroeder writes of the Intellectual Difficulties of elder scholars and the way to meet them. Dr. Carpenter's address to elder scholars ought to prove useful, as also should Florence H. Ellis's plea for the careful study of child-character; while Mr. Bowie's dream of what a school should be strikes that high note of the ideal which must be in the minds of all who would labour in this work with success, although so many of us must confess how far we are from realising it. There are several other good articles in this number, the excellence of which is striking, as well as notes from the Secretary of the Sunday School Association and that of the Social Service Union calling attention to their respective societies. And a useful set of notes for teachers, supplying suggestions for seven lessons on religious topics, is contributed by the Rev. Henry Rawlings. In fact, there is only one person in the Sunday school who is not represented in the new "Quarterly"—the scholar.

This little magazine has an ideal which is different from that of any of its predecessors, except the ill-fated "Helper." From the list of announcements for its next number it gives promise of being able to maintain the standard it has set. We wish it every success, and heartily commend it to the notice of all who recognise the extreme importance to the continued life of our churches which the Sunday school presents. One matter of perennial discussion among us is not represented—the difficulty, namely, of obtaining male teachers. We recommend the editor to obtain from its secretary an account of the manner in which the Unitarian Brotherly Benefit Society has solved that difficulty for Birmingham during more than a century. It should prove both interesting and instructive. It has always been a matter of wonder to me that in the Manchester district especially the value of such a society, both for the



schools and for the teachers themselves, has not long ago been recognised, and its methods adopted.

FELIX TAYLOR.

## THE CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

### BIRD-STUDY IN SPRING.

#### II.

If any children took the advice I gave last week and made a note book study of two or more birds, I hope they were careful to put plenty of sketches. It is neither necessary, nor always advisable, to draw a whole bird. You learn more by sketching parts, such as the curve of the throat, the outline of a bill, a tail, or even a tail end. I gave you a hint to draw a bird's legs so as to show the width of its stride; two strokes would do this. Did it occur to you to count and draw the toes of each bird? If so, how many did you see on each foot, and were they all of equal length? If not, was the hind one longer or shorter than the rest?

While sketching you are pretty certain to have found the answers to these questions, for "drawing is the art of learning to see." This is specially true if you draw in colour, so I hope you possess coloured chalks or a paint box.

I advise you to choose two or more fresh birds (living ones if possible) for special study each week, and at the same time to make use, a moderate use, of any books on birds you can get hold of.

You will find that the careful study of, and sketching of, even two living birds has enabled you to look at bird pictures and to read bird books more intelligently than you could before. You can compare and remember much better.

If you live in the pure country, or are there for your Easter holidays, you will have a happy time looking for birds in the woods and hedgerows, or the bare hillside.

If you live in a town, inquire whether there is a museum in it, and if it contains stuffed birds go and see them. London children will of course go to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. They will find a grand collection of birds there. The male and female specimens are often found in a case with their nest which contains eggs, or stuffed nestlings. Infinite trouble has been taken to secure either a real nest, or a skilful imitation, so that one can learn as much as if one saw the real thing. Every case bears a label telling you about the birds inside. If possible go to the museum on a bright day as the colours of the birds are then better seen. Do not try to recollect details of too many birds at once, and examine each that you do study at least twice during the visit; several points which you missed the first time will strike you the second time. Remember that living birds seldom allow you to look at them at close quarters, so it will be well to back away from the case in order to see what a bird looks like when viewed from a distance of from three to five yards. You will do well to examine especially those stuffed birds of which live specimens are pretty sure to be found in the district in which you will carry on your bird study. If you live in a small town or on the out-

skirts of a large one you are pretty sure to find the jackdaw, starling, house martin; among lanes lined with hedges, the thrush, blackbird, chaffinch; among wide open fields the lark, meadow pipit; among trees the tree creeper, long tailed tit, stock dove; among larch woods, the crossbill; on high bare pastures the peewit, wheat-ear; on still higher ground the curlew, ring ousel; by lakes and streams the water ousel or dipper, coot, kingfisher; by the sea the various gulls, and the rock pipit or sea lark. This list is only a rough guide, and it must not lead you to suppose that these birds do not overflow more or less into other districts than those I have put them into. Thus the gulls fly inland on river courses; and to get grubs they will haunt freshly ploughed lands; and the thrush will build her nest by a stream, or in a town garden.

The enthusiastic bird student will rise early, for at six o'clock or even seven the birds are less shy and timid than later in the day and will let you come rather nearer to them. From eleven to three I have found to be the least favourable time for watching birds. Many of them, I imagine, are having a day sleep and have tucked themselves away in cool, shady corners. At the same time I have known birds to work right on through the noontide at nest building or brood feeding.

Before I give you some hints on nest finding I must impress on you that these articles are being written for bird-loving children, not nest-destroying children, so you must feel put on your honour not to act cruelly towards any birds whose nests I may have helped you to find. I do not say that you are never, under any circumstances, to take a single egg from any nest, but in most cases you must be content to look and not touch; for it needs a very careful hand to lift an egg out of a nestful without cracking other eggs or damaging the delicate structure which has cost the birds much toil. If every boy or girl who cares about birds takes "just one" egg every time a nest is discovered it is easy to see that the supply of eggs and birds would soon run short. I have not begun to make and do not intend to make a collection of eggs, a collection of facts is more to my taste; but when for any special purpose I have taken an egg from a nest I have been careful to do it if possible in some secluded spot where it was unlikely that any other person would trouble that nest. I always looked carefully at the ground near to make sure that there were no foot-marks or bruised twigs or leaves such as would be left by some previous visitor, for a previous visitor might mean an egg taken.

If you are looking for nests in a wood or along a hedge try to have the trees or bushes between you and the sunlight, then you will see pretty far even into a holly hedge. Be on the look out for wisps of hay or dry grass sticking out of the crevices of a stone wall. I once traced a redstart to a long stretch of wall and then lost her. Careful examination led to the discovery of a morsel of wool sticking at the edge of a narrow opening too high up to have been left by a passing sheep. I threw a fern leaf on the ground exactly below this crevice to mark it, hid myself

and watched silently. Redstarts are very cautious, so I had to wait many minutes, but at last I saw her come out of that very crevice.

EMILY NEWLING.

(To be continued.)

### SHORT NOTICES.

The April issue of the Garden City magazine fulfils the promise of the earlier numbers. The most important article is that in which Mr. Charles Platts treats of the protomartyr, St. Alban. There are also interesting little essays on Folk-Drama and on Observing Birds. The rest of the contents deal with purely local matters. (The City: J. M. Dent, 6d.)

In the current issue of *Co-Partnership* our good friend, Mr. H. G. Chancellor, gives a very interesting account of his participation in a new movement connected with the Hampstead Tenants' Estate. The men employed on the works have hired a small house wherein to eat their meals, and pass their leisure time in reading and other mental occupation. Once a week a speaker is invited to address them on some subject of interest, and Mr. Chancellor chose "Citizenship" for his subject. It is an encouraging sign when labouring men will devote half of their dinner-hour to listening to such an address as is outlined here. We congratulate Mr. Chancellor on the fitness and the terseness of his remarks, as also on the appreciation of his audience which induced them to invite him to pay them a second visit.

### NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES.

[Notices and Reports for this Department should be as brief as possible, and be sent in by Wednesday, or Thursday Morning at latest.]

**Aberdeen.**—The visit of Dr. Eliot was a delight and an inspiration. It happened at an unfortunate time when the universities and schools were closed and professors and teachers were on holiday. The day (which was thanksgiving Wednesday) was wet, but there was a good congregation. Dr. Eliot spoke of "The Modern Interpretation of Religion," and his dignified and gracious exposition charmed the listeners. After service there was a social gathering, at which an opportunity was given to meet Dr. Eliot personally. This was highly appreciated. The congregation held Easter Day as "Covenant Sunday," and in connection with it there was a self-denial offering which yielded nearly £10.

**Bootle.**—On Wednesday evening, April 7, the members and friends of Bootle Free Church assembled at the Free Church Hall to bid farewell to their pastor, the Rev. J. M. Mills, and his wife and family. The chairman, Mr. W. T. Pidgeon, spoke eloquently of the value of the services and of the high personal worth of the reverend gentleman and wished him a hearty "Godspeed" in his new sphere of labour at Fallowfield, near Manchester. The Revs. J. Crowther Hirst, J. Collins Odgers, B.A., H. D. Roberts, T. L. Jones, H. W. Hawkes, A. A. Lee (Congregationalist), A. E. Parry, M. Watkins, and W. Reynolds took part in the meeting. The chairman presented Mr. Mills with a purse of gold, and Mrs. Rawlins, after a charming speech on behalf of the ladies of the congregation, presented a brooch to Mrs. Mills and suitable presents to the Misses Alice, Flora, and Dorothy Mills. During the evening Mr. Frank Creswell, L.R.A.M. rendered two violin solos in his usual excellent manner to a highly appreciative audience.

**Dover.**—On Saturday last, in the Town Hall, was held a public competition among the various Bands of Hope in Dover, for the silver medal offered by the Mayor. The competition was in singing and musical drill, and Adrian, street came in first, winning the medal, thanks to the untiring labours of the conductor, Mr. Charles Johnson.



**Glasgow: Ross-street Church (Induction Service).**—The series of induction meetings on the appointment of the Rev. A. Scruton, late missionary minister of the United Free Church of Scotland, passed off with great success. The church on Sunday, April 11, was crowded at both services, afternoon and evening. The Rev. S. A. Eliot, D.D., of Boston, and the Rev. Jas. Forrest, of Glasgow, conducted the induction service, in the afternoon. Dr. Eliot's words of advice and counsel to the new minister were much appreciated, and have helped greatly to increase the enthusiasm with which Mr. Scruton's coming has been received by the members of the congregation. At the evening service the Rev. A. Scruton himself officiated and took for his subject the appropriate title, "How I Became a Unitarian." On Friday, April 16, a welcome social to the Rev. and Mrs. Scruton was held, and again the attendance of members and friends was very gratifying. The Revs. J. Forrest (Glasgow), R. B. Drummond (Edinburgh), E. T. Russell (M'Quaker Trust Lecturer), and A. Webster (Aberdeen), along with prominent members of the church, accompanied Mr. Grant, who presided, and the Rev. A. Scruton, to the platform. After tea was served addresses were delivered, interspersed with musical items splendidly rendered by the choir, and a most enjoyable evening was spent. The committee trust that much good will result from the series of meetings just held and that the cause at Ross-street will begin to revive again, now that a regular minister has been appointed after nearly a year's interregnum.

**Ilford.**—The quarterly meeting of the congregation was held last Tuesday evening. There were sixty members present. The report showed an average attendance at the morning services of forty-one, and at the evening services of seventy-eight. The list of members totals 100. The financial statement showed £55 added to the building fund since the opening. Short reports of the newly-formed Sunday-school and adult class were given. The establishment of a Postal Mission for the County of Essex was recommended. Refreshments and songs followed.

**Kilmarnock.**—On Monday, April 12, the Rev. A. Webster addressed a meeting in connection with the Progressive League. Nearly 200 were present. His subject was "The Self-revelation of the Bible." Among the audience there were several members of his former congregation. After the meeting there was a supper arranged in his honour by some of the old members of Clerk's-lane Church and others at which memories of life in the church (now closed) were brought forth. The readiness of so many to hear of the New Theology in Kilmarnock shows what a calamity it was to close the church. It ought to be taken in hand again and carried heartily on in accordance with its honourable free traditions.

**London: Stamford-street Chapel.**—In aid of the Men's Club Fund for the building of new Club premises at Blackfriars, a sale of work was held at the chapel on Thursday and Friday, 15th and 16th April. The sale was opened on Thursday afternoon by Mr. John Harrison, President of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, who generously subscribed the sum of £10 towards the Fund. The date, which was chosen because of its special suitability for many of the workers, proved somewhat inopportune so far as the buyers were concerned, and the afternoon attendance was small; but in spite of this fact a sum of over £50 was realised by the sale, not including subscriptions previously received. This gratify-

ing result is largely due to the help so generously given by many friends from Brixton and other chapels, who gave their help in taking the responsibility as managers of stalls, in conducting entertainments, and in sending contribution for the sale.

**National Unitarian Temperance Association,** in conjunction with the United Kingdom Alliance, held a successful meeting in the Victoria Hall, Waterloo Bridge-road, on Friday, April 16. The Rev. Frederic Allen, in the chair, explained the object of the meeting, and said they were there to rejoice in the passing into law of the Children Act. The question, "What manner of child shall this be?" was frequently answered unsatisfactorily owing to ignorance and callousness. Public opinion, stirred by the trenchant articles in the *Tribune* newspaper, now unhappily non-existent, had expressed itself in the press columns in public meeting, and had found active expression in many of the provisions of this Act. He cited the clauses relative to children and public-houses, and declared their effect to be beneficial to child life in many ways. Mr. H. G. Chancellor said that the nation had recently been much excited about the provision of instruments for the destruction of human life, but in the Children Act was an instrument for saving life—from parental neglect, from low moral influences, and from all death dealing agencies. He gave a lucid explanation of the very complicated clauses relative to the protection of baby lives in "baby farms." There were provisions which aimed at saving young children from cruelty and neglect by parents and guardians in the important matters of feeding and sleeping accommodation. The provision of special courts for juvenile offenders gave many a young person a chance to "walk straight," and the substitution of a school in lieu of a prison was a real sign of the coming of the Kingdom of God upon earth. After singing "When wilt Thou save the people?" Mr. Francis S. Carter, of the United Kingdom Alliance, made a short speech, in which he pointed out that ignorance and folly were responsible for much harm in the world, and fearful results accrued to the individuals and the nation in consequence. The large audience showed their appreciation of the orchestral selections given at intervals and of the songs and recital of Mrs. B. Browning's "Cry of the Children," rendered by Mrs. W. Randall Marshall.

**Stenhousemuir.**—Special services were conducted on Sunday, April 18, by Rev. A. Webster. In the forenoon the church (which has been kept open for worship on Universalist lines for forty years mainly by lay preachers) was well filled with hearty worshippers. In the evening there was a much larger attendance. The plucky people are delighted at the prospect of regular services which their connection with Unitarians has opened up. An evidence of the respect in which their members are held was given in the *Falkirk Herald* of April 14 by the choosing of Robert Stark, one of the founders of the church, as The Man You Know. The work of Rev. E. T. Russell, B.A., in the district has been reviving.

## OUR CALENDAR.

It is requested that notice of any alteration in the Calendar be sent to the Publisher not later than Thursday Afternoon.

SUNDAY, April 25.

### LONDON.

Acton, Creffield-road, 11.15, Mr. T. L. HOOPER; 7, Rev. DAVID DAVIS.  
Bermondsey, Fort-road, 7, Rev. J. HIPPERSON.  
Blackfriars Mission and Stamford-street Chapel, 11 and 7, Rev. J. C. BALLANTYNE.  
Brixton, Unitarian Christian Church, Effra-road, 11 and 7, Rev. G. C. CRESSEY, D.D.  
Child's Hill, All Souls', Weech-road, Finchley-road, 11.15 and 6.30, Rev. GEORGE CRITCHLEY, B.A.  
Croydon, Free Christian Church, Wellesley-road, 11 and 7, Rev. W. J. JUPP.  
Essex Church, The Mall, Notting Hill Gate, 11 and 6.30, Rev. FRANK K. FREESTON.  
Forest Gate, corner of Dunbar-road, Upton-lane, 11, Mr. H. D. LEADBETTER; 6.30, Mr. S. P. PENWARDEN.

Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Chatham-place, 11.15 and 7, Rev. H. RAWLINGS, M.A.  
Hampstead, Rosslyn-hill Chapel, 11.15 and 6.30, Rev. ALFRED HALL, M.A.  
Highgate-hill, Unitarian Christian Church, 11, Rev. A. A. CHARLESWORTH; and 7.  
Ilford, Unitarian Christian Church, High-road, 11 and 7, Rev. G. W. THOMPSON.  
Islington, Unity Church, Upper-street, 11 and 7, Rev. FELIX TAYLOR, B.A.  
Kentish Town, Clarence-road, N.W., 11, Rev. F. HANKINSON; 7, Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.  
Kilburn, Quex-road, 11 and 7, Rev. CHARLES ROPER, B.A.  
Lewisham, Unitarian Christian Church, High-street, 11 and 7, Rev. W. W. C. POPE.  
Little Portland-street Chapel, 11.15 and 7, Rev. J. PAGE HOPPS.  
Mansford-street Church and Mission, Bethnal Green, 7, Rev. GORLON COOPER.  
Peckham, Avondale-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. ARTHUR PEARSON.  
Richmond, Free Church, Ormond-road, 11.15, Rev. DAVID DAVIS; 7, ROBERT DUNSTAN, Esq., M.R.C.S.  
Stoke Newington Green, 11.15 and 7.  
Stratford Unitarian Church, 11, P.S.M., Mr. W. RUSSELL; 6.30, Mr. R. W. PETTINGER.  
Wandsworth Unitarian Christian Church, East Hill, 11, Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.; 7, Rev. F. HANKINSON.  
Wimbledon, Collegiate Hall, Worple Road, 11 and 7, Rev. W. E. WILLIAMS, B.A.  
Wood Green, Unity Church, 11 and 7, Rev. Dr. MUMMERY.  
Woolwich, Carmel Chapel, Anglesea-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. L. JENKINS JONES.

ABERYSTWITH, New Street Meeting House, 11 and 6.30, E. GLYN EVANS.  
BATH, Trim-street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. McDOWELL.  
BLACKPOOL, Dickson-road, North Shore, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. ROBERT MCGEE.  
BLACKPOOL, South Shore Unitarian Free Church, Lytham-road South, 11 and 6.30.  
BOURNEMOUTH, Unitarian Church, West Hill-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. C. C. COE.  
BRIGHTON, Free Christian Church, New-road, 11 and 7, Rev. PRIESTLEY PRIME.  
BUXTON, Hartington-road Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. GEORGE STREET.  
CANTERBURY, Ancient Chapel, Blackfriars, 10.50, Rev. J. H. SMITH.  
CHELTENHAM, Bayshill Unitarian Church, Royal Well Place, 11 and 7, Rev. J. FISHER JONES.  
CHESTER, Matthew Henry's Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. D. JENKIN EVANS.  
DOVER, Adrian-street, near Market-square, 11 and 6.30, Rev. C. A. GINEVER, B.A.  
DUBLIN, Stephen's Green West, 12 and 7, Rev. Rev. W. E. GEORGE, M.A.  
GUILDFORD, Ward-street Church, North-street, 11 and 6.30, Mr. GEORGE WARD.  
HASTINGS, South Terrace, Queen's-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. S. BURROWS.  
HORSHAM, Free Christian Church, Worthing-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. J. MARTEN.  
LEEDS, Mill Hill, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. C. HARGROVE, M.A.  
LEICESTER, Free Christian Church, 11, Rev. EDGAR I. FRIPP, B.A.; 6.30, Mr. E. PICKERING, B.A.  
LEICESTER, The Great Meeting, 11 and 6.30.  
LIVERPOOL, Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, 11 and 6.30, Rev. CHARLES CRADDOCK.  
LIVERPOOL, Hope-street Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. H. D. ROBERTS.  
LIVERPOOL, Ullet-road, Sefton-Park, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. C. ODGERS, B.A.

### DELICIOUS COFFEE.

**RED  
WHITE  
& BLUE**

For Breakfast & after Dinner.





MAIDSTONE, Unitarian Church, Earl-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. FARQUHARSON.  
 NEW BRIGHTON and LISCARD, Memorial Church, Manor-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. ERNEST PARRY.  
 NEWPORT, Isle of Wight, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. RUDDLE.  
 OXFORD, Manchester College, 11.30, Rev. Dr. S. A. ELIOT.  
 PORTSMOUTH, High-street Chapel, 11 and 6.45, Rev. JAMES BURTON, M.A.  
 PORTSMOUTH, St. Thomas-street, 6.45, Rev. T. BOND.  
 SCARBOROUGH, Westborough, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. JOSEPH WAIN.  
 SEVENOAKS, Bessell's Green, The Old Meeting House, 11, Rev. J. F. PARMITER.  
 SHEFFIELD, Upper Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. M. R. SCOTT. (School Sermons.)  
 SIDMOUTH, Old Meeting, High-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. WILLIAM AGAR.  
 SOUTHPORT, Portland-street Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. C. J. STREET, M.A., LL.B.  
 TAVISTOCK, Abbey Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. RATTENBURY HODGES.  
 TORQUAY, Unity Hall, Lower Union-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. E. O'CONNOR, B.D.  
 TUNBRIDGE WELLS, Dudley Institute, Dudley-road, 11.  
 WEST KIRBY, Tynwald Hall, opposite Station (side door), 11 and 6.30, Rev. H. W. HAWKES

**GERMANY.**  
 HAMBURG, The Church of the Liberal Faith. Logenhaus, Welckerstrasse, 11. Rev. GARDNER PRESTON.

**SOUTH AFRICA.**  
 CAPE TOWN, Free Protestant (Unitarian) Church, Hout-street, 6.45, Rev. RAMSDEN BALMFORTH.

#### MARRIAGE.

BOYLE—ROBINSON.—On April 20, at St. James' Church, Nottingham, by the Rev. Bingley Cass, Philip, third son of James Boyle, Headingley, Leeds, to Edith, youngest daughter of Mrs. Robinson and the late Robert Robinson, of Burton-on-Trent.

#### DEATHS.

HILL.—On April 7, at 5, Crouch-street, Banbury, Oxfordshire, Anne Hill, widow of the late Rev. H. Hill, aged 76.  
 HOLME.—On April 17, at 20, Lord-street, Southport, Harriet Holme. Friends kindly accept this (the only) intimation.

THE REV. JAMES E. STEAD is open to receive appointments after April 25.—Address, 13, Wallwork-terrace, The Hague, Stalybridge.

## Manchester College, Oxford

THE following promises have been received in response to the Appeal issued by the Committee for Donations to clear off the Debt of £3,000 and for Annual Subscriptions to meet the deficit of £600 per annum.

WILLIAM KENRICK, President.  
 JAMES DRUMMOND,  
 S. ALFRED STEINTHAL, } Vice-Presidents.  
 H. ENFIELD DOWSON, Chairman of Committee.  
 GROSVENOR TALBOT, Treasurer,  
 Southfield, Burley, Leeds.  
 A. H. WORTHINGTON,  
 1, St. James's-square, Manchester;  
 HENRY GOW, 3, John-st., Hampstead, London,  
 Hon. Secretaries.

#### Donations.

Amount previously advertised	£2,990	10	0
Miss M. E. Swaine	...	10	0
Mrs. Clara Ryland	...	10	0
Mrs. Odgers	...	5	0
John H. Every, Esq.	...	2	2
Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.	...	1	0
Total	£3,018	12	0

#### New Annual Subscriptions.

Amount previously advertised	£98	6	0
Mrs. Henry J. Eveleigh (in 1910)	3	3	0
John M. Oliver, Esq.	2	2	0
Mrs. Odgers	2	2	0
Prof. Henry Jones, M.D.	2	2	0
Rev. C. D. Badland, M.A.	2	2	0
Miss Worsley	1	1	0
Rev. Neander Anderton, B.A.	1	1	0
Rev. A. C. Fox, B.A.	1	1	0
Rev. James Harwood, B.A.	1	1	0
R. J. Hall, Esq.	0	10	6
Rev. J. M. Connell	0	10	6
Total	£115	2	0

#### Increased Annual Subscriptions.

Amount previously advertised	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
from 149	8	6	to 302	9	0	
Mrs. Russell Martineau (in 1910)	2	2	0	5	0	0
David Martineau, Esq.	2	2	0	4	4	0
Miss Fanny A. Short	2	2	0	3	3	0
Thomas Worthington, Esq.	2	2	0	3	3	0
Richard S. Osler, Esq.	2	2	0	3	3	0
Miss Gaskell	1	1	0	2	2	0
Total	£160	19	6	£323	4	0

## MANCHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD

"The College adheres to its original principle of freely imparting Theological Knowledge, without insisting on the adoption of particular Theological Doctrines."

#### PRINCIPAL:

REV. J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A., D.D., D.Litt.

#### GRANTS TO UNDERGRADUATE

STUDENTS for the Ministry:—(a) A College BURSARY, of £50 a year, may be obtained by a Candidate who passes the "Undergraduate Entrance Examination" of the College, and also Responsions or one of the Examinations accepted by the University of Oxford in lieu of Responsions; (b) A College EXHIBITION of £70 a year may be obtained by a Candidate who gains distinction in the Entrance Examination (as above), and in a further optional Examination; and (c) In case of high distinction, a College SCHOLARSHIP of £90 a year may be awarded. The further examination may be taken in (1) advanced classics; or (2) English Language and Literature; or (3) Mathematics; or (4) a branch of Natural Science.

Bursaries are tenable at Oxford or other approved University, EXHIBITIONS AND SCHOLARSHIPS only at Oxford.

GRANTS TENABLE AT THE COLLEGE.—COLLEGE BURSARIES may be obtained by Students for the Ministry, and DANIEL JONES BURSARIES by Ministers who desire to devote a year to further study. For further particulars apply to the Principal, or to

A. H. WORTHINGTON,  
 1, St. James's-square, Manchester.  
 Rev. HENRY GOW,  
 3, John-street, Hampstead, London, N.W.  
 Hon. Secretaries.

## Situations, VACANT AND WANTED.

### TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

K YNOCH LIMITED have VACANCIES in their Commercial Department for a few YOUNG GENTLEMEN of good Education and Manners. No Premium required. Term of Indentures four years.—Apply by letter only to the Secretary, Kynoch Limited, Witton, Birmingham.

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